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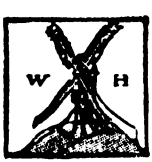

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To

George [illegible]

I Dedicate these sketches, stories, studies, or [illegible] as you call them. We have galloped together over many leagues of Pampa by day and night, and therefore I may as well [illegible] the tales (or what as you call them), as [illegible] lights and breezes, as is to be expected from a mere [illegible]

PREFACE

TO-DAY in warfare all the niceties of old-world tactics are fallen into contempt. No word of outworks, ravelins, of mamelons, of counter-scarps, of glacis, fascines; none of the terms by means of which Vauban obscured his art, are even mentioned. Armies fall to and blow such brains as they may have out of each other's heads without so much as a salute. And so of literature, your "few first words," your "avant-propos," your nice approaches to the reader, giving him beforehand some taste of what is to follow, have also fallen into disuse. The man of genius (and in no age has self-dubbed genius called out so loud in every street, and been accepted at its own appraisement) stuffs you his epoch-making book full of the technicalities of some obscure or half-forgotten trade, and rattles on at once, sans introduction, twenty knots an hour, like a torpedo boat. No preface, dedication, not even

an apology *pro existentiâ ejus* intervening betwixt the bewildered public and the full power of his wit. A graceless way of doing things, and not comparable to the slow approach by "prefatory words," "censura," "dedication," by means of which the writers of the past had half disarmed the critic ere he had read a line. I like to fancy to myself the progress of a fight in days gone by, with marching, countermarching, manœuvring, so to speak, for the weather-gauge, and then the general engagement all by the book of arithmetic, and squadrons going down like men upon a chess-board after nice calculation, and like gentlemen.

Who, hidden in a wood, watching a nymph about to bathe, would care to see her strip off her "duds" like an umbrella-case, and bounce into the river like a water-rat?—a lawn upon the grass, a scarf hung on a bush, a petticoat rocked by the wind upon the sward, then the shy trying of the water with the naked feet, and lastly something flashing in the sun which you could hardly swear you had seen, so rapidly it passed into the stream, would most enchant the gaze of the rapt watcher hidden behind his tree. And so of literature, wheedle me by degrees, your reader to your book, as did the giants of the past in grace-

ful preface, dedication, or what do you call it, that got the readers, so to speak, into the book before they were aware. It seems to me, a world all void of grace must needs be cruel, for cruelty and grace go not together, and perhaps the hearts of the pig-tailed, pipe-clayed generals of the past were not more hard than are the hearts of their tweed-clad descendants who now-a-days blow you a thousand savages to paradise, and then sit down to lunch.

Let there be no mistake; the writer and the reader are sworn foes. The writer labouring for bread, or hopes of fame, from idleness, from too much energy, or from that uncontrollable dance of St. Vitus in the muscles of the wrist which prompts so many men to write (the Lord knows why), works, blots, corrects, rewrites, revises, and improves; then publishes, and for the most part is incontinently damned. Then comes the reader cavalierly, as the train shunts at Didcot, or puffs and snorts into Carlisle, and gingerly examining the book says it is rubbish, and that he wonders how people who should have something else to do, find time to spend their lives in writing trash.

I take it that there is a modesty of mind as deep implanted in the soul of man as is the

supergrafted post-Edenian modesty of the body; which latter, by the way, so soon is lost, restraints of custom or convention laid aside.

Who that would strip his clothes off, and walk down Piccadilly, even if the day were warm (the police all drunk or absent), without some hesitation, and an announcement of his purpose, say, in the columns of the *Morning Post?*

Therefore, why strip the soul stark naked to the public gaze without some hesitation and due interval, by means of which to make folk understand that which you write is what you think you feel; part of yourself, a part, moreover, which once given out can never be recalled?

So of the sketches in this book, most of them treat of scenes seen in that magic period, youth, when things impress themselves on the imagination more sharply than in after years; and the scenes too have vanished; that is, the countries where they passed have all been changed, and now-a-days are full of barbed-wire fences, advertisements, and desolation, the desolation born of imperfect progress. The people, too, I treat of, for the most part have disappeared; being born unfit for progress, it has passed over them, and their place is occupied by worthy men who cheat to

better purpose, and more scientifically. Therefore, I, writing as a man who has not only seen but lived with ghosts, may perhaps find pardon for this preface, for who would run in heavily and dance a hornpipe on the turf below which sleep the dead? And if I am not pardoned for my hesitation, dislike, or call it what you will, to give these little sketches to the world without preamble, after my fashion, I care not overmuch.

In the phantasmagoria we call the world, most things and men are ghosts, or at the best but ghosts of ghosts, so vaporous and unsubstantial that they scarcely cast a shadow on the grass. That which is most abiding with us is the recollection of the past, and . . . hence this preface.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

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CRUZ ALTA

CRUZ ALTA

Pasted into an old scrap-book, chiefly filled with newspaper cuttings from Texan and Mexican newspapers containing accounts of Indian fights, the prowess of different horses (notably of a celebrated "claybank," which carried the mail-rider from El Paso to Oakville, Arizona), and interspersed with advertisements of strayed animals, pictures of Gauchos, Indians, Chilians, Brazilians, and Gambusinos, is an old coffee-coloured business card. On it is set forth, that Francisco Cardozo de Carvallo is the possessor of a "Grande Armazem de Fazendas, ferragems, drojas, chapeos, miudezas, e objectos de fantasia e de modas."

All the above, "Com grande reduccao nos preços." Then occurs the significant advertença, "Mas A Dinheiro," and the address Rua do Commercio, No. 77.—CRUZ ALTA.

OFTEN on winter nights when all the air is filled with whirling leaves dashing against the panes, when through the house sweep gusts of wind making the passages unbearable with cold, the rooms disconsolate, and the whole place feel eerie and ghostlike as the trees creak, groan and labour, like a ship at sea, I take the scrap-book down.

In it are many things more interesting by far to me at certain times than books or papers, or than the conversation of my valued friends; almost as great a consolation as is tobacco to a bruised

mind; and then I turn the pages over with delight tinged with that melancholy which is the best part of remembrance.

So amongst tags of poetry as Joaquim Miller's lines "For those who fail," the advertisement for my fox-terrier Jack, the "condemndest little buffler" the Texans called him, couched in the choicest of Castilian, and setting forth his attributes, colour and name, and offering five dollars to any one who would apprehend and take him to the Callejon del Espiritu Santo, Mexico, curious and striking outsides of match-boxes, one entire series illustrating the "Promessi Sposi"; of scraps, detailing news of Indian caciques long since dead, a lottery-ticket of the State of Louisiana, passes on "busted" railways, and the like, is this same coffee-coloured card.

I cannot remember that I was a great dealer at the emporium, the glories of which the card sets forth, except for cigarettes and "Rapadura"; that is, raw sugar in a little cake done up in maize-leaves, matches, and an occasional glass of white Brazilian rum.

Still during two long months the place stood to me in lieu of club, and in it I used to meet occasional German "Fazenderos," merchants from Surucaba, and officers on the march from San Paulo to Rio Grande; and there I used to lounge, waiting for customers to buy a "Caballada" of some hundred horses, which a friend and I had

brought with infinite labour from the plains of Uruguay. Thinking upon the strange and curious types I used to meet, clad for the most part in loose black Turkish trousers, broad-brimmed felt hats kept in their place by a tasselled string beneath the chin, in real or sham vicuña ponchos, high patent-leather boots, sewn in patterns with red thread; upon the horses with silver saddles and reins, securely tied to posts outside the door, and on the ceaseless rattle of spurs upon the bare brick floors which made a sort of obligato accompaniment to the monotonous music of the guitar, full twenty years fall back.

Yet still the flat-roofed town, capital of the district in Rio Grande known as Encima de la Sierra, the stopping-place for the great droves of mules which from the Banda Oriental and Entre Rios are driven to the annual fair at Surucaba; the stodgy Brazilian countrymen so different from the Gauchos of the River Plate; the negroes at that time slaves; the curious vegetation, and the feeling of being cut off from all the world, are fresh as yesterday.

Had but the venture turned out well, no doubt I had forgotten it, but to have worked for four long months driving the horses all the day through country quite unknown to me, sitting the most part of each night upon my horse on guard, or riding slowly round and round the herd, eating jerked beef, and sleeping, often wet, upon the ground, to

lose my money, has fixed the whole adventure on my memory for life.

Failure alone is interesting.

Successful generals with their hands scarce dry from the blood of half-armed foes; financiers, politicians; those who rise, authors whose works run to a dozen editions in a year: the men who go to colonies with or without the indispensable half-crown and come back rich, to these we give our greetings in the market-place; we make them knights, marking their children with the father's bourgeois brand: we marvel at their fortune for a brief space, and make them doctors of civil law, exposing them during the process to be insulted by our undergraduates, then they drop out of recollection and become uninteresting, as nature formed their race.

But those who fail after a glorious fashion, Raleigh, Cervantes, Chatterton, Camoens, Blake, Claverhouse, Lovelace, Alcibiades, Parnell, and the last unknown deck-hand who, diving overboard after a comrade, sinks without saving him: these interest us, at least they interest those who, cursed with imagination, are thereby doomed themselves to the same failure as their heroes were. The world is to the unimaginative, for them are honours, titles, rank and ample waistbands; foolish phylacteries broad as trade union banners; their own esteem and death to sound of Bible leaves fluttered by sorrowing friends, with the sure hope of waking

up immortal in a new world on the same pattern as the world that they have left.

After a wretched passage down the coast, we touched at Rio, and in the Rua Direita, no doubt now called Rio Primero de Mayo or some other revolutionary date, we saw a Rio Grandense soldier on a fine black horse. As we were going to the River Plate to make our fortunes, my companion asked me what such a horse was worth, and where the Brazilian Government got their remounts. I knew no horses of the kind were bred nearer than Rio Grande, or in Uruguay, and that a horse such as the trooper rode, might in the latter country be worth an ounce. We learned in Rio that his price was eighty dollars, and immediately a golden future rose before our eyes. What could be easier than in Uruguay, which I knew well and where I had many friends (now almost to a man dead in the revolutions or killed by rum), to buy the horses and drive them overland to the Brazilian capital?

We were so confident of the soundness of our scheme that I believe we counted every hour till the boat put to sea.

Not all the glories of the Tijuca with its view across the bay straight into fairyland, the red-roofed town, the myriad islets, the tall palm-tree avenue of Botafogo, the tropic trees and butterflies, and the whole wondrous panorama spread at our feet, contented us.

During the voyage to the River Plate we planned

the thing well out, and talked it over with our friends. They, being mostly of our age, found it well reasoned, and envied us, they being due at banks and counting-houses, and other places where no chance like ours of making money, could be found. Arrived in Buenos Ayres, a cursed chance called us to Bahia Blanca upon business, but though we had a journey of about a thousand miles to make through territory just wasted by the Indians and in which at almost every house a man or two lay dead, we counted it as nothing, for we well knew on our return our fortunes were assured.

And so the autumn days upon the Arroyo de los Huesos seemed more glorious than autumn days in general, even in that climate perhaps the most exhilarating of the world. Horses went better, "maté" was hotter in the mouth, the pulperia caña seemed more tolerable, and the "China" girls looked more desirable than usual, even to philosophers who had their fortunes almost as good as made.

Our business in the province of Buenos Ayres done, and by this time I have forgotten what it was, we sold our horses, some of the best I ever saw in South America, for whatever they would fetch, and in a week found ourselves in Durazno, a little town in Uruguay, where in the camps surrounding, horses and mules were cheap.

About a league outside the town, and in a wooded elbow of the river Yi, lived our friend Don Guillermo.

I myself years before had helped to build his house; and in and out of season, no matter if I arrived upon a "pingo" shining with silver gear, or on a "mancaron" with an old saddle topped by a ragged sheepskin, I was a welcome guest.

Ah! Don Guillermo, you and your brother Don Tomas rise also through the mist of twenty years.

Catholics, Scotchmen, and gentlemen, kindly and hospitable, bold riders and yet so religious that, though it must have been a purgatory to them as horsemen, they used to trudge on foot to mass on Sunday, swimming the Yi when it was flooded, with their clothes and missals on their heads, may God have pardoned you.

Not that the sins of either of them could have been great, or of the kind but that the briefest sojourn in purgatory should not have wiped them out.

To those rare Catholic families in Scotland an old-world flavour clings. When Knox and that "lewid monk," the Regent Murray, all agog for progress and so-called purer worship, pestered and bothered Scotland into a change of faith, those few who clung to Catholicism seemed to become repositories of the traditions of an older world.

Heaven and hell, no resting-place for the weaker souls between, have rendered Scotland a hard place for the ordinary man who wants his purgatory, even if by another name. Surely our Scottish theologians

had done well, although they heated up our hell like a glass furnace, to leave us purgatory; that is if "Glesca" be not purgatory enough even for those who, like North Britons, have no doubt on any subject either in heaven above, or in the earth below. So to the house of Don Guillermo—even the name has now escaped me, though I see it, mud-built and thatched with "paja," standing on a little sandy hill, surrounded on two sides by wood, on the others looking straight out upon the open "camp"—hot foot we came. Riding upon two strayed horses known as "ajenos," bought for a dollar each in Durazno, we arrived, carrying our scanty property in saddle-bags, rode to the door, called out "Hail, Mary!" after the fashion of the country and in deference to the religion of our hosts, which was itself of so sincere a caste that every one attempted to conform to it, as far as possible, whilst in their house; received the answer "Without sin conceived"; got off, and straightway launched into a discussion of our plan.

Assembled in the house were Wycherley, Harrington and Trevelyan, and other commentators, whose names have slipped my mind. Some were "estancieros," that is cattle or sheep farmers; others again were loafers, all mostly men of education, with the exception of Newfoundland Jack, a sailor, who had left the navy in a hurry, after some peccadillo, but who, once in the camp, took a high place amongst men, by his knowledge of splicing,

making turks' heads, and generally applying all his acquired sea-lore to saddlery, and from a trick he had of forcing home his arguments with a short knife, the handle fixed on with a raw cow's tail, and which in using he threw from hand to hand, and generally succeeded in burying deeply in his opponent's chest. Our friends all liked the scheme, pronounced it practical and businesslike, and, to show goodwill, despatched a boy to town to bring a demijohn of caña back at full speed, instructing him to put it down to our account, not to delay upon the way, and to be careful no one stole it at the crossing of the Yi.

Long we sat talking, waiting for the advent of the boy, till at last, seeing he would not come that night, and a thick mist rising up from the river having warned us that the night was wearing on, we spread our saddles on the floor, and went to sleep. At daybreak, cold and miserable, the boy appeared, bringing the caña in a demijohn, and to our questions said he had passed the river, hit the "rincon," and heard the dogs bark in the mist; but after trying for an hour could never find the house. Then, thinking that his horse might know the way, laid down the reins, and the horse took him straight to the other horses, who, being startled at the sudden apparition of their friend saddled and mounted in the dead of night, vanished like spectres into the thickest of the fog. Then tired of riding, after an hour or two, took off his saddle,

and had passed the night, as it appeared at daybreak, not a quarter of a mile away.

Between the town and Don Guillermo's house there ran a river called the Yi; just at the pass a "balsa" plied, drawn over by stout ropes. On either side the "pass" stood pulperias, that is camp-stores, where gin and sardines, Vino Carlon, Yerba, and all the necessaries of frontier life could be procured. Horses and cattle, mules and troops of sheep passed all the day, and gamblers plied their trade, whilst in some huts girls, known as "Chinas," watched the passers-by, loitering in deshabille before their mare's hide doors, singing "cielitos," or the "gato," to the accompaniment of a guitar, or merely shouting to the stranger, "Che, si quieres cosa buena vente por acá." A half-Arcadian, half-Corinthian place the crossing was; fights there were frequent, and a "Guapeton," that is, a pretty handler of his knife, once kept things lively for a month or two, challenging all the passers-by to fight, till luckily a Brazilian, going to the town, put things in order with an iron-handled whip.

The owner of the "balsa," one Eduardo Peña, cherished a half-romantic, half-antagonistic friendship for Don Guillermo, speaking of him as "muy Catolico," admiring his fine seat upon a horse, and yet not understanding in the least the qualities which made him a man of mark in all the "pagos" from the Porongos to the Arazati. "Catolico,"

with Peña, was but a matter of pure faith, and going to mass a work of supererogation; and conduct such as the eschewal of the China ladies at the pass, with abstinence from all excess in square-faced gin, dislike to monté, even with "Sota en la puerta," and the adversary with all his money staked upon another card, seemed to him bigotry; for bigotry is after all not so much mere excess of faith or want of tolerance, but a neglect to fall into the vices of our friends. So, mounted on our two "agenos," one a jibber, the other a kicker at the stirrup, and extremely hard to mount, we scoured the land. Gauchos, Brazilians, negroes, troperos, cattle-farmers, each man in the whole "pago" had at least a horse to sell. Singly, driven, led, pulled unwillingly along in raw-hide ropes, and sitting back like lapdogs walking in the park, the horses came. We bought them all after much bargaining, and then began to hunt about at farms, estancias, and potreros, and to inquire on every side where horses could be got. All the "dead-beats," "sancochos," buck-jumpers, wall-eyed and broken-backed, we passed in a review. An English sailor rode up to the place, dressed as a Gaucho, speaking but little English, with a west-country twang. He, too, had horses, which we bought, and the deal over, launched into the story of his life.

It seemed that he had left a man-of-war some fifteen years ago, married a native girl and settled down, and for ten years had never met an English-

man. In English, still a sailor, but in Spanish, a gentleman, courteous and civil, and fit to take his place with any one; full of fine compliments, and yet a horse-coper; selling us three good horses, and one, that the first time I mounted him kicked like a zebra, although our friend had warranted him quite free from vice, well bitted, and the one horse he had which he reserved in general for the saddle of his wife.

In a few days we had collected sixty or seventy, and to make all complete, a man arrived, saying that specially on our account, thirteen wild horses, or horses that had run wild, had been enclosed. He offered them on special terms, and we, saddling at once, rode twelve or thirteen leagues to see them; and after crossing a river, wading through a swamp, and winding in and out through a thick wood for several miles, we reached his house. There, in a strong corral, the horses were, wild-eyed and furious, tails sweeping to the ground, manes to their knees, sweating with fear, and trembling if any one came near. One was a piebald dun, about eight years of age, curly all over like a poodle; one Pampa, that is, black with a head as if it had been painted white to the ears; behind them, coal-black down to his feet, which, curiously enough, were all four white. A third, Overo Azulejo, slate-coloured and white; he was of special interest, for he had twisted in his mane a large iron spur, and underneath a lump as large as an apple, where the spur

had bumped upon his neck for years during his gallop through the woods and plains. Each horse had some peculiarity, most had been tame at one time, and were therefore more to be dreaded than if they had been never mounted in their lives.

As it was late when we arrived we tied our horses up and found a ball in progress at the house. Braulio Islas was the owner's name, a man of some position in the land, young and unmarried, and having passed some years of his life in Monte Video, where, as is usual, he had become a doctor either of law or medicine; but the life had not allured him, and he had drifted back to the country, where he lived, half as a Gaucho, half as a "Dotorcito," riding a wild horse as he were part of him, and yet having a few old books, quoting dog Latin, and in the interim studying international law, after the fashion of the semi-educated in the River Plate. Fastening our horses to long twisted green-hide ropes, we passed into the house. "Carne con cuero" (meat cooked with the hide) was roasting near the front-door on a great fire of bones. Around it men sat drinking maté, smoking and talking, whilst tame ostriches peered into the fire and snapped up anything within their reach; dogs without hair, looking like pigs, ran to and fro, horses were tied to every post, fire-flies darted about the trees; and, above all, the notes, sung in a high falsetto voice of a most lamentable Paraguayan "triste," quavered in the night air and set the dogs a-barking, when all

the company at stated intervals took up the refrain, and chanted hoarsely or shrilly of the hardships passed by Lopez in his great camp at Pirayú.

Under the straw-thatched sheds whole cows and sheep were hung up; and every one, when he felt hungry, cut a collop off and cooked it in the embers, for in those days meat had no price, and if you came up hungry to a house a man would say: "There is a lazo, and the cattle are feeding in a hollow half a league away."

A harp, two cracked guitars, the strings repaired with strips of hide, and an accordion, comprised the band. The girls sat in a row, upon rush-seated chairs, and on the walls were ranged either great bowls of grease in which wicks floated, or home-made candles fixed on to nails, which left them free to gutter on the dancers' heads. The men lounged at the door, booted and spurred, and now and then one walked up to the girls, selected one, and silently began to dance a Spanish valse, slowly and scarcely moving from the place, the hands stretched out in front, and the girl with her head upon his shoulder, eyes fast closed and looking like a person in a trance. And as they danced the musicians broke into a harsh, wild song, the dancers' spurs rattled and jingled on the floor, and through the unglazed and open windows a shrill fierce neigh floated into the room from the wild horses shut in the corral. "Dulces," that is, those sweetmeats made from the yolk of eggs, from almonds, and from

nuts, and flavoured with cinnamon and caraways brought by the Moors to Spain, and taken by the Spaniards to the Indies, with sticky cakes, and vino seco circulated amongst the female guests. The men drank gin, ate bread (a delicacy in the far-off "camp"), or sipped their maté, which, in its little gourds and silver tube, gave them the appearance of smoking some strange kind of pipe.

"Que bailen los Ingleses," and we had to acquit ourselves as best we could, dancing a "pericon," as we imagined it, waving our handkerchiefs about to the delight of all the lookers-on. Fashion decreed that, the dance over, the "cavalier" presented his handkerchief to the girl with whom he danced. I having a bad cold saw with regret my new silk handkerchief pass to the hand of a mulatto girl, and having asked her for her own as a remembrance of her beauty and herself, received a home-made cotton cloth, stiff as a piece of leather, and with meshes like a sack.

Leaving the dance, as Braulio Islas said, as more "conformable" to Gauchos than to serious men we started bargaining. After much talking we agreed to take the horses for three dollars each, upon condition that in the morning Islas and all his men should help us drive a league or two upon the road. This settled, and the money duly paid, we went to bed, that is, lay down upon our saddles under the "galpon." To early morning the guitars went on, and rising just about day-break we found

the revellers saddling their horses to depart in peace. We learned with pleasure there had been no fight, and then after a maté walked down to the corral. Knowing it was impossible to drive the horses singly, after much labour we coupled them in twos. I mounted one of them, and to my surprise, he did not buck, but after three or four plunges went quietly, and we let the others out. The bars were scarcely down when they all scattered, and made off into the woods. Luckily all the drivers were at hand, and after three or four hours' hard galloping we got them back, all except one who never reappeared; and late in the evening reached Don Guillermo's house and let our horses into a paddock fenced with strong posts of ñandubay or Tala and bound together with pieces of raw hide.

So for a week or two we passed our lives, collecting horses of every shade and hue, wild, tame and bagualon, that is, neither quite wild nor tame, and then, before starting, had to go to "La Justicia" to get a passport with their attributes and marks.

I found the Alcalde, one Quintin Perez, sitting at his door, softening a piece of hide by beating on it with a heavy mallet of ñandubay. He could not read, but was so far advanced towards culture as to be able to sign his name and rubricate. His rubric was most elaborate, and he informed me that a signature was good, but that he thought a rubric more authentic. Though he could not decipher

the document I brought for signature, he scrutinized the horses' marks, all neatly painted in the margin, discussed each one of them, and found out instantly some were from distant "pagos," and on this account, before the signature or rubric was appended, in addition to the usual fee, I was obliged to "speak a little English to him," which in the River Plate is used to signify the taking and receiving of that conscience money which causes the affairs of justice to move pleasantly for all concerned. Meanwhile my partner had gone to town (Durazno) to arrange about the revision of the passport with the chief authorities. Nothing moved quickly at that time in Uruguay; so after waiting one or two days in town, without a word, he quietly let loose his horse in a by-street at night to save his keep, and casting about where he should leave his saddle, thought that the cloak-room of the railway-station might be safe, because the station-master was an Englishman. The saddle, having silver stirrups and good saddle-cloths and silver-mounted reins and bit, was worth more than the horse, which, being a stray, he had bought for a couple of dollars, and was not anxious to retain.

After a day or two of talk, and "speaking English," he wanted his saddle, and going to the station found it gone. Not being up at that time in the ways of the Republic, he informed the police, waited a day, then two days, and found nothing done. Luckily, just at that time, I came to town

and asked him if he had offered a reward. Hearing he had not, we went down to see the Commissary of Police, and found him sitting in his office training two cocks to fight. A rustle and the slamming of a door just marked the hurried exit of a lady, who must have been assisting at the main. Compliments duly passed, cigarettes lighted and maté circulating, "served" by a negro soldier in a ragged uniform with iron spurs upon his naked feet who stood attention every time he passed the gourd in which the maté is contained to either of us, we plunged into our talk.

"Ten dollars, Comissario."

"No, señor, fifteen, and a slight gratification to the man who brings the saddle back."

We settled at thirteen, and then the Commissary winked slowly, and saying, "This is not Europe," asked for a little something for himself, received it, and calling to the negro, said—

"Tio Gancho, get at once to horse, take with you one or two men, and scour the 'pago' till you bring this saddle back. See that you find it, or I will have your thumbs both broken as your toes are, by San Edovige and by the Mother of our Lord."

A look at Tio Gancho showed both his big toes had been broken when a slave in Brazil, either to stop him walking, or, as the Commissary thought, to help him to catch the stirrup, for he was a noted rider of a redomon.[1]

[1] A redomon is a half-tamed horse.

Duly next day the saddle was brought (so said the Commissary) into the light of justice, and it then appeared one of the silver stirrups had been lost. The Commissary was much annoyed, reproached his men, being, as he said he was: "Un hombre muy honrado." After thinking the case well out, he returned me two and a half dollars out of the thirteen I had agreed to pay. Honour no doubt was satisfied upon both sides, and a new silver stirrup cost ten dollars at the least; but as the saddle was well worth sixty, we parted friends. That is, we should have parted so had not the "Hombre muy honrado" had another card to play.

"How long do you want the thief detained?" he asked. And we, thinking to be magnanimous and to impress him with our liberal ideas, said loftily—

"A month will do."

"All right," he answered, "then I must trouble you for thirty dollars more for the man's maintenance, and for the gaoler's fee." This was a stopper over all, and I said instantly—

"Being ignorant of your laws, perhaps we have looked at the man's offence too hardly, a week will do." So after paying five dollars down, we invited the Commissary to drink, and left him well knowing that we should not be out of sight before the man would be released, and the five dollars be applied strictly towards the up-keep of "justice" in the

Partido of the Yi. Months afterwards I heard the culprit worked two days cutting down weeds with a machete in the public square; then, tired of it, being "un hombre de á caballo," had volunteered to join the army, was received into the ranks, and in a few weeks' time rose to be sergeant, for he could sign his name.

All being ready, and some men (one a young Frenchman born in the place) being found with difficulty, the usual revolution having drained off the able-bodied men, we made all ready for the start. We bid good-bye to Don Guillermo, and to Don Tomas, giving them as an addition to their library (which consisted of some lives of saints and an odd volume of "el culto al Falo," which was in much request), our only book the "Feathered Arrow," either by Aimard or by Gerstaeker, and mounting early in the morning after some trouble with the wilder of our beasts, we took the road.

For the first few leagues Don Guillermo rode with us, and then, after a smoke, bade us good-bye and rode away; his tall, lithe figure dressed in loose black merino trousers tucked into his boots, hat tied beneath his chin, and Pampa poncho, fading out of sight, and by degrees the motion of his right arm touching his horse up, Gaucho fashion, at every step, grew slower, then stood still, and lastly vanished with the swaying figure of the rider, out of sight. Upon what Pampa he now gallops is to me unknown, or whether, where he is,

horses accompany him; but I would fain believe it, for a heaven on foot would not be heaven to him; but I still see him as he disappeared that day swaying to every motion of his horse as they had been one flesh. "Adios, Don Guillermo," or perhaps "hasta luego," you and your brother Don Tomas, your hospitable shanty, and your three large cats, "Yanish" and "Yanquetruz," with one whose name I cannot now recall, are with me often as I think on times gone by; and still to-day (if it yet stands), upon the darkest night I could take horse outside Durazno, cross the Yi, not by the "balsa," but at the ford below, and ride without a word to any one straight to your house.

Days followed one another, and nights still caught us upon horseback, driving or rounding up our horses, and nothing interested us but that "el Pangare" was lame; "el Gargantillo" looked a little thin, or that "el Zaino de la hacinda" was missing in the morning from the troop. Rivers we passed, the Paso de los Toros, where the horses grouped together on a little beach of stones refused to face the stream. Then sending out a yoke of oxen to swim first, we pressed on them, and made them plunge, and kept dead silence, whilst a naked man upon the other bank called to them and whistled in a minor key; for horses swimming, so the Gauchos say, see nothing, and head straight for a voice if it calls soothingly. And whilst they swam, men in canoes lay down the stream to stop them

drifting, and others swimming by their side splashed water in their faces if they tried to turn. The sun beat on the waste calling out the scent of flowers; kingfishers fluttered on the water's edge, herons stood motionless, great vultures circled overhead, and all went well till, at the middle of the stream, a favourite grey roan mare put up her head and snorted, beat the water with her feet, and then sank slowly, standing quite upright as she disappeared.

Mountains and plains we passed, and rivers fringed with thick, hard thorny woods; we sweltered in the sun, sat shivering on our horses during the watches of the night, slept fitfully by turns at the camp fire, ate "charqui" and drank maté, and by degrees passing the Paso de los Novillos, San Fructuoso, and the foot-hills of Haedo and the Cuchilla de Peralta with its twin pulperias, we emerged on to the plain, which, broken here and there by rivers, slopes toward the southern frontier of Brazil. But as we had been short-handed from the first, our "caballada" had got into bad ways. A nothing startled them, and the malign example of the group of wildlings brought from Braulio Islas, led them astray, and once or twice they separated and gave us hours of work to bring them back. Now as a "caballada" which has once bolted is in the future easily disposed to run, we gave strict orders no one was to get off, though for a moment, without hobbling his horse.

Camped one cold morning on a river, not far from Brazil, and huddled round a fire, cooking some sausages, flavoured with Chile pepper, over a fire of leaves, one of our men who had been on horseback watching all the night, drew near the fire, and getting off, fastened his reins to a heavy-handled whip, and squatted on them, as he tried to warm his hands. My horse, unsaddled, was fastened by a lasso to a heavy stone, and luckily my partner and the rest all had their horses well secured, for a "coati" dived with a splash after a fish into the river. In a moment the horses all took fright, and separating, dashed to the open country with heads and tails erect, snorting and kicking, and left us looking in despair, whilst the horse with the whip fastened to the reins joined them, and mine, tied to the stone, plunged furiously, but gave me time to catch him, and mounting barebacked, for full five hours we rode, and about nightfall brought the "caballada" back to the camp, and driving them into an elbow of the river, lighted great fires across the mouth of it, and went to sleep, taking it conscientiously in turns to curse the man who let his horse escape.

Five leagues or so upon the road the frontier lay, and here the Brazilian Government had guards, but we being business men smuggled our horses over in the night, led by a noted smuggler, who took us by devious paths, through a thick wood, to a ford known to him, only just practicable, and this we

passed swimming and wading, and struggling through the mud. The river wound about through beds of reeds, trees known as "sarandis" grew thickly on the banks, and as we passed "carpinchos" [1] snorted; great fish leaped into the air and fell with a resounding crash into the stream, and in the trees was heard the scream of vultures, as frightened by our passage they rose and weltered heavily through the thick wood. By morning we were safe into Brazil, passing a league or more through a thick cane-brake, where we left several of our best horses, as to pursue them when they straggled was impossible without running the risk of losing all the rest. The crossing of the river had brought us to another world. As at Carlisle and Gretna in the old days, or as at Tuy and Valenza even to-day, the river had set a barrier between the peoples as it had been ten miles instead of a few hundred yards in width. Certainly, on the Banda Oriental, especially in the department of Tacuarembò, many Brazilians had emigrated and settled there, but living amongst the Gaucho population, in a measure they had been forced to conform to the customs of the land. That is, they practised hospitality after the Gaucho fashion, taking no money from the wayfaring man for a piece of beef; they lent a horse, usually the worst they had, if one came to their house with one's horse tired; their women showed themselves

[1] Hydrochœrus capybara.

occasionally; and not being able to hold slaves, they were obliged to adopt a different tone to men in general than that they practised in the Empire of Brazil. But in the time of which I write, in their own country they still carried swords, slaves trotted after the rich "fazendero's" horse, the women of the family never sat down to table with the men, and if a stranger chanced to call on business at their house, they were as jealously kept from his eyes as they had all been Turks.

The "Fazenda" houses had great iron-studded doors, often a moat, and not infrequently a rusty cannon, though generally dismounted, and a relic of bygone time. The traveller fared, as a general rule, much worse than in the Banda Oriental, for save at the large cattle-farms it was impossible to buy a piece of meat. Admitted to the house, one rarely passed beyond the guest-chamber, a room with four bare white-washed walls; having for furniture a narrow hard-wood table with wrought-iron supports between its legs; chairs cut apparently out of the solid block, and a tin bucket or a large gourd in the corner, with drinking-water; so that one's sojourn at the place was generally brief, and one's departure a relief to all concerned. Still on the frontier the Gaucho influence made itself a little felt, and people were not so inhospitable as they were further in the interior of the land. Two or three leagues beyond the pass there was a little town called "Don Pedrito," towards which we made;

but a "Pampero," whistling from the south, forced us to camp upon a stream known as the "Poncho Verde," where, in the forties, Garibaldi was reported to have fought.

Wet to the skin and without food, we saw a fazenda not a mile away, rode up to it, and for a wonder were asked inside, had dinner in the guest-chamber, the owner sitting but not eating with us; the black Brazilian beans and bacon carried in pompously by three or four stalwart slaves, who puffed and sweated, trod on each other's naked toes, and generally behaved as they had been carrying sacks of corn aboard a ship, only that in this instance no one stood in the gangway with a whip. Much did the conversation run on politics; upon "A Guerra dos Farapos," which it appeared had riven the country in twain what time our host was young. Farapo means a rag, and the Republicans of fifty years ago in Rio Grande had adopted the device after the fashion of "Les gueux." Long did they fight, and our host said: "Praise to God, infructuously," for how could men who wore moustaches and full beards be compared to those who, like our host himself, wore whiskers carefully trimmed in the style of those which at the same epoch in our country were the trade-mark of the Iron Duke? Elective kings, for so the old "conservador" termed presidents, did not find favour in his eyes; and in religion too the "farapos" were seriously astray. They held the doctrine that all

creeds should be allowed; which I once held myself, but now incline to the belief that a religion and a name should be bestowed at baptism, and that it should be constituted heresy of the worst kind, and punishable by a fine, to change or palter with either the name or the religion which our fathers have bestowed.

Politics over, we fell a-talking upon other lands; on Europe and England, Portugal, and as to whether "Rondon" was larger than Pelotas, or matters of that sort. Then our host inquired if in "Rondon" we did not use "la bosa," and I not taking the thing up, he rose and stretching out his hands, set them revolving like a saw, and I then saw our supposed national pastime was what he meant; and told him that it was practised, held in repute, and marked us out as a people set apart; and that our greatness was largely founded on the exercise he had endeavoured to depict. We bade farewell, not having seen a woman, even a negress, about the place; but as we left, a rustling at the door showed that the snuff-and-butter-coloured sex had been observing us after the fashion practised in Morocco and in houses in the East. The hospitable "conservador" sent down a slave with a great basket full of oranges; and seated at the camp we ate at least three dozen, whilst the man waited patiently to take the basket back.

Night caught us in the open "camp," a south wind blowing, and the drops congealing as they

fell. Three of us muffled in ponchos rode round the horses, whilst the others crouched at the fire, and midnight come, the riders rode to the fire, and stretched on the wet mud slept fitfully, whilst the others took their place. Day came at last; and miserable we looked, wet, cold, and hungry, the fire black out, matches all damp, and nothing else to do but march till the sun rose and made life tolerable. Arrived at a small rancho we got off, and found the owner was a Spaniard from Navarre, married to a Brazilian woman. In mongrel Portuguese he bade us welcome; said he was no Brazilian, and that his house was ours, and hearing Spanish brightened up, and said in broken Spanish, mixed with Portuguese, that he could never learn that language, though he had passed a lifetime in the place. The country pleased him, and though he had an orange garden of some three acres in extent, though palms, mameyes and bananas grew around his door, he mourned for chestnuts, which he remembered in his youth, and said he recollected eating them whilst in Navarre, and that they were better than all the fruit of all Brazil; thinking, like Naaman, that Abana and Pharpar were better than all the waters of Israel, or rivers of Damascus; or perhaps moved in some mysterious way by the remembrance of the chestnut forests, the old grey stone-roofed houses, and the wind whistling through the pine woods of some wild valley of Navarre. At the old Spaniard's house a difficulty cropped up with our

men. I having told a man to catch a horse which looked a little wild, he answered he was not a horse-breaker, and I might ride the beast myself. I promptly did so, and asked him if he knew what a wild horse was, and if it was not true that horses which could be saddled without tying their hind legs were tame, and the rest laughing at him, he drew his knife, and running at me, found himself looking down the barrel of a pistol which my partner with some forethought had produced. This brought things to a crisis, and they all left us, with a hundred horses on our hands. Several Brazilians having volunteered, we took them, bought a tame horse accustomed to carry packs, procured a bullock, had it killed, and the meat "jerked"; and making bags out of the hide, filled them with food, for, as the Spaniard said, "in the country you intend to cross you might as well be amongst Moors, for even money will not serve to get a piece of beef." A kindly soul the Spaniard, his name has long escaped me, still he was interesting as but the truly ignorant can ever be. The world to him was a great mystery, as it is even to those who know much more than he; but all the little landmarks of the narrow boundaries of his life he had by heart; and they sufficed him, as the great world itself cannot suffice those who, by living in its current, see its muddiness.

So one day told another, and each night found us on horseback riding round the drove. Through

forest, over baking plain, up mountain paths, through marshes, splashing to the saddle-flaps, by lone "fazendas," and again through herds of cattle dotting the plain for miles, we took our way. Little straw huts, each with a horse tied day and night before them, were our fairway marks. Day followed night without adventure but when a horse suddenly threw its rider and a Brazilian peon uncoiled his lasso, and with a jangling of spurs against the stirrups, sprang into life, and in a moment the long snaky rope flew through the air and settled round the runaway just underneath his ears. Once in a clearing, as we plodded on, climbing the last barrier of the mountain range, to emerge upon the district called "Encima de la Sierra," a deer appeared jumping into the air, and coming down again on the same spot repeatedly, the Brazilians said that it was fighting with a snake, for "God has given such instinct to those beasts that they attack and kill all snakes, knowing that they are enemies of man."[1] A scheme of the creation which, if held in its entirety, shows curious lacunæ in the Creator's mind, only to be bridged over by that faith which in itself makes all men equal, that is, of course, when they experience it and recognize its charm. So on a day we crossed the hills, rode through a wood, and came out on a plain at the far end of which a little town appeared.

[1] The Gauchos often lay a deer-skin on their saddles, and wear boots made of deer-skin, alleging that serpents are afraid to touch them.

For about ten leagues in circumference the plain stretched out, walled in with woods, which here and there jutted out into it, forming islands and peninsulas. The flat-roofed town straggled along three flat and sandy streets; the little plaza, planted with mameyes and paraiso trees, served as a lounging-place by day, by night a caravanserai for negroes; in time of rain the streets were turned to streams, and poured their water into the plaza, which became a lake. At the west corner of the square was situated Cardozo's store, the chief emporium, mart, and meeting-place (after the barber's and the chemist's) of the whole town. Two languid and yellow, hermaphroditic young Brazilians dressed in alpaca coats, white trousers, and patent leather boots dispensed the wares, whilst negroes ran about rolling in casks of flour, hogsheads of sugar, and bales of black tobacco from Bahia, or from Maranhão. Such exterior graces did the little town of the High Cross exhibit to us, wearied with the baking days and freezing nights of the last month's campaign. Whether some Jesuit in the days gone by, when missionaries stood up before their catechumens unsustained by Gatling guns, sheltered but by a rude cross in their hands and their meek lives, had named the place, in commemoration of some saving act of grace done by Jehovah in the conversion of the heathen, none can tell. It may be that the Rood set up on high was but a landmark, or again to mark a

frontier line against the heathen to the north, or yet it may have been the grave of some Paulista, who in his foray against the Jesuits in Paraguay died here on his return, whilst driving on before him a herd of converts to become slaves in far San Paulo, to the greater glory of the Lord. All these things may have been, or none of them; but the quiet sleepy place, the forests with their parrots and macaws, their herds of peccaries, their bands of screaming monkeys, the bright-striped tiger-cats, the armadillos, coatis, capibarás, and gorgeous flaming "seibos," all intertwined by ropes of living cordage of lianas, and the supreme content of all the dwellers in the district, with God, themselves, their country, and their lives, still after twenty years is fresh, and stirs me, as the memory of the Pacific stirs a reclaimed "beach-comber" over his grog, and makes him say, "I never should have left them islands, for a man was happy in 'em, living on the beach."

To this commercial centre (centro do commercio) we were advised to go, and there I rode, leaving my partner with the peons riding round the caballada upon the plains. Dressed as I was in the clothes worn by the Gauchos of the Banda Oriental, a hat tied underneath the chin with a black cord, a vicuña poncho, and armed with large resounding silver spurs, I made a blot of colour in Cardozo's shop amongst the quietly dressed Brazilians, who, though they were some of the

smartest men in South America upon a horse, were always clad in sober-coloured raiment, wore ordinary store-cut trousers, and had their feet endued with all the graces of a five-dollar elastic-sided boot.

Half-an-hour's talk with the chief partner shattered all our plans. It then appeared that to take horses on to Rio was impossible, the country, after San Paulo, being one dense forest, and even if the horses stood the change of climate, the trip would take a year, thus running off with any profit which we might expect. Moreover, it appeared that mules were in demand throughout Brazil, but horses, till past San Paulo, five hundred miles ahead, but little valued, and almost as cheap, though much inferior in breed to those bred on the plains of Uruguay. He further told us to lose not a day in teaching all the horses to eat salt, for without that they would not live a month, as once the range of mountains passed between Cruz Alta and the plains, no horse or mule could live without its three months' ration of rock-salt; there being in the pasture some malign quality which salt alone could cure. Naturally he had the cheapest salt in the whole town, and as our horses were by this time so thin that it was quite impossible to take them further without rest, they having been a month upon the road, we set about to find an enclosed pasture where we could let them feed.

Xavier Fernandez, a retired slave- and mule-dealer, was the man on whom by accident we fell. Riding about the plain disconsolately, like Arabs changing their pastures, and with our horses feeding near a little pond, we met him. An old straw hat, bed-ticking trousers, and with his naked feet shoved into slippers of carpindo leather, and an iron spur attached to one of them and hanging down at least an inch below his heel, mounted upon a mule saddled with the iron-framed Brazilian saddle, with the addition of a crupper, a thing strange to our eyes, accustomed to the wild horses of the plains, he did not look the type of "landed gentleman," but such he was, owner of flocks and herds, and, in particular, of a well-fenced pasture, enclosing about two leagues of land.

After much talk of things in general, of politics, and of the revolution in progress in the republic we had left, upon our folly in bringing horses, which could go no further into the interior, and of the money we should have made had we brought "bestas," that is, mules, we agreed to pay him so much a month for the use of his fenced pasture, and for our maintenance during the time we stayed. Leaving the horses feeding, watched by the men, we rode to see the place. Upon the way Xavier imparted much of history, a good deal of his lore, and curious local information about Cruz Alta, duly distorted, as befits a reputable man, through the

perspective of his predilections, politics, faith, opinions, and general view of life.

We learned that once Cruz Alta was a most important place, that six-and-thirty thousand mules used to be wintered there, and then in spring moved on to the great fair at Surucuba in the Sertão, that is the forest district of San Paulo, and then sold to the merchants from the upper districts of Brazil. But of late years the number had been much reduced, and then stood at about twelve thousand. This he set down to the accursed steamboats which took them up the coast, to the continual fighting in the state of Uruguay, and generally to the degeneration which he thought he saw in man. In the heyday of the prosperity of the place "gold flowed from every hand," so much so, that even "as mulheres da vida" kept their accounts in ounces; but now money was scarce, and business done in general by barter, coin being hardly even seen except for mules, for which it was imperative, as no one parted with "bestas" except for money down. Passing a little wood we saw a row of stakes driven into the ground, and he informed us that they were evidently left by some Birivas, that is people from San Paulo, after having used them to secure their mules whilst saddling. The Paulistas, we then learned, used the "sirigote," that is, the old-fashioned high-peaked saddle brought from Portugal in times gone by, and not the "recado," the saddle of the Gauchos, which is flat, and suited

better for galloping upon a plain than for long marches over mountain passes and through woods. All the points, qualities, with the shortcomings and the failings of a mule, he did rehearse. It then appeared a mule should be mouse-coloured, for the red-coloured mule is of no use, the grey soft-footed, and the black bad-tempered, the piebald fit "for a German," which kind of folk he held in abhorrence mixed with contempt, saying they whined in speaking as it had been the whining of an armadillo or a sloth. The perfect mule should be large-headed, not with a little-hammer head like to a horse, but long and thin, with ears erect, round feet, and upon no account when spurred ought it to whisk its tail, for that was most unseemly, fit but for Germans, Negroes, Indians, and generally for all those he counted senseless people—"gente sem razão"; saying "of course all men are of one flesh, but some are dog's flesh, and let them ride mules who whisk about their tails like cattle in a marsh." Beguiled by these, and other stories, we soon reached the gate of the enclosure, and he, dismounting, drew a key from one of the pockets of his belt and let us in. A short half-hour brought us up to his house, passing through ground all overgrown with mia-mia and other shrubs which did not promise to afford much pasturage; but he informed us that we must not expect the grasses of the plains up at Cruz Alta, and thus conversing we arrived before his house.

Surrounded by a fence enclosing about an acre, the house stood just on the edge of a thick wood. On one side were the corrals for horses and for cattle, and on the other the quarters of the slaves. In shape the houses resembled a flattish haystack thatched with reeds, and with a verandah rising round it, supported on strong posts. At either end a kind of baldachino, one used as a stable and the other as a kitchen, and in the latter a fire continually alight, and squatted by it night and day a negress, either baking flat, thin girdle-cakes made of maize, shaking the flour out of her hand upon an iron plate, or else filling a gourd of maté with hot water, and running to and fro into the house to give it to her mistress, never apparently thinking it worth while to take the kettle with her into the house.

The family, not quite so white as Xavier himself, consisted of a mother always in slippers, dressed in a skirt and shift, which latter garment always seemed about to fall down to her waist, and two thin, large-eyed, yellowish girls arrayed in vestments like a pillow-case, with a string fastening them at the narrowest place. Slave girls of several hues did nothing and chattered volubly, and their mistress had to stand over them, a slipper in her hand, when maize was pounded in a rough mortar hewn from a solid log, in which the slaves hammered with pestles, one down, the other up, after the fashion of blacksmiths making a horsehoe, but with

groans, and making believe to be extenuated after three minutes' work, and stopping instantly the moment that their mistress went into the house to light her cigarette.

An official in Cruz Alta, known as the Capitão do Matto, holding a status between a gamekeeper and a parish clerk, kept by the virtue of his office a whipping-house, to which recalcitrant or idle slaves were theoretically sent; but in the house of Xavier at least no one took interest enough in anything, except Xavier himself, to take the trouble; and the slaves ruled the female part of the establishment, if not exactly with a rod of iron, still to their perfect satisfaction, cooking and sewing now and then; sweeping, but fitfully; and washing when they wanted to look smart and figure at a dance. The Capitão do Matto was supposed to bring back runaways and keep a leash of blood-hounds, but in the memory of man no one had seen him sally forth, and for the blood-hounds, they were long dead, although he drew regular rations for their maintenance. In the interior of Brazil his office was no sinecure, but in Cruz Alta horses were plentiful, the country relatively easy, and slaves who ran away, which happened seldom, timed their escape so as to put a good day's journey between them and any possible pursuit, and on the evening of the fifth day, if all went well, they got across the frontier into Uruguay.

Terms once arranged, we let our horses loose,

laid out rock-salt in lumps, first catching several of the tamest horses, and forcing pieces into their mouths; they taught the others, and we had nothing more to do. We paid our peons off, got our clothes washed, rested, and then found time at first hang heavy on our hands. Hearing an Englishman lived about ten leagues off, we saddled up and rode to visit him. After losing ourselves in a thick forest of some kind of pine, we reached his house, but the *soi-disant* Briton was from Amsterdam, could speak no English, was a little drunk, but asked us to get off and dine with him. During the dinner, which we had all alone, his wife and daughter standing looking at us (he too drunk to eat), pigs ran into the room, a half-grown tapir lay in a corner, and two new-caught macaws screamed horribly, so that, the banquet over, we did not stay, but thanked him in Portuguese, which he spoke badly, and rode off home, determining to sleep at the first wood, rather than face a night in such a place.

The evening caught us near to a forest, the trail, sandy and white, running close to a sort of cove formed in the trees, and here we camped, taking our saddles off, lighting a fire, and lying down to sleep just in the opening of the cove, our horses tied inside. All through the night people appeared to pass along the road. I lay awake half-dozing now and then, and watched the bats, looked at the fire-flies flitting about the trees, heard the

harsh howling of the monkeys, the tapirs stamp, the splash made by the lobos and carpinchos as they dashed into the stream, and then slept soundly, and awoke to find one of the horses gone. The moon shone brightly, and, waking up my friend, I told him of our loss. We knew the horse must have a rope attached to him, and that he probably would try to get back to Cruz Alta, along the road we came. My horse was difficult to bit, but by the aid of tying up one foot, and covering his eyes up with a handkerchief, we bitted him, then mounted both of us upon his back, hiding the other saddle behind some grass, and started on the road. The sandy trail was full of horses' tracks, so that we could do nothing but ride on, hoping to catch him feeding by the way. About a league we rode, and then, not seeing him, turned slowly back to get the other saddle, make some coffee, and start home when it was light. To our astonishment, upon arriving at the cove, the other horse was there, and neighing wildly, straining on his rope, and it appeared that he had never gone, but being tied close to the wood had wandered in, and we, thinking he must have gone, being half-dazed with sleep, had never thought of looking at his rope.

Defrauded, so to speak, out of our Englishman, and finding that the horses, after the long journey and the change of water and of grass, daily grew thinner, making it quite impossible to move them, forwards or back, and after having vainly tried to

sell them, change them for mules, or sugar, quite without success, no one except some "fazendero" here and there caring for horses in a land where every one rode mules, we settled down to loaf. Once certain we had lost our money and our pains, nothing remained but to wait patiently until the horses got into sufficient state to sell, for all assured us that every day we went further into the interior, they would lose flesh, that we should have them bitten by snakes in the forests, and arrive at Rio, if we ever got there, either on foot, or with but the horses which we rode.

For a short time we had almost determined to push on, even if we arrived at Rio with but a horse apiece. Then came reflection, that reflection which has dressed the world in drab, made cowards of so many heroes, lost so many generous impulses, spoiled so many poems, and which mankind has therefore made a god of, and we decided to remain. Then did Cruz Alta put on a new look. We saw the wondrous vegetation of the woods, felt the full charm of the old-world quiet life, watched the strange multi-coloured insects, lay by the streams to mark the birds, listened for the howlings of the monkeys when night fell; picked the strange flowers, admired the butterflies floating like little blue and yellow albatrosses, their wings opened and poised in the still air, or wondered when a topaz-coloured humming-bird, a red macaw, an orange-and-black toucan, or a red-crested cardinal flitted across our path.

Inside the wood behind the house were clearings, made partly by the axe and partly by fire, amongst the tall morosimos, coronillos, and palo santos, and in the clearings known as "roças" grew beans and maize, with mandioca and occasionally barley, and round them ran a prickly hedge either of cactuses or thorny bush, cut down to keep out tapirs and deer, and usually in a straw hut a negro lay, armed with a flint-lock gun to fire at parrots, scare off monkeys, and generally to act as guardian of the place. Orange and lemon trees, with citrons and sweet limes, grew plentifully, and had run wild amongst the woods; bananas were planted in the roça; but what we liked the best was a wild fruit called Guavirami, which grew in patches on the open camp, yellow and round, about the size of a small plum, low-growing, having three or four small stones, cold as an icicle to taste upon the hottest day. A little river ran through the middle of the wood, and in a stream a curious machine was placed for pounding maize, driven by water-power, and unlike any contrivance of a similar nature I had ever seen before. An upright block of wood, burned from the centre of a tree, stood in the stream, hollowed out in the centre to contain the maize; water ran up a little channel, and released a pestle, which fell with a heavy thud upon the corn, with the result that if one left a basket full in the great mortar over-night, by morning it was pounded, saving that labour which God Himself seems to have thought not so

ennobling after all, as He first instituted it to carry out a curse.

So one day told, and may, for all I know, have certified another, but we recked little of them, riding into Cruz Alta now and then and eating cakes at the confectioner's, drinking innumerable glasses of sweet Malaga, laying in stores of cigarettes, frequenting all the dances far and near, joining in cattle-markings, races, and anything in short which happened in the place.

Perhaps our greatest friend was one Luis, a slave, born in Angola, brought over quite "Bozal" (or muzzled, as the Brazilians say of negroes who can speak no Portuguese), then by degrees became "ladino," was baptized, bought by our host Xavier, and had remained with him all the remainder of his life. Black, and not comely in the least, bow-legged from constant riding, nose flat, and ears like flappers, a row of teeth almost as strong as a young shark's, flat feet, and crisp Angola wool which grew so thickly on his head that had you thrown a pin on it, it could not have reached the skin, he yet was honest and faithful to the verge of folly; but then, if heaven there be, it can be but inhabited by fools, for wise men, prudent folk, and those who thrive, have their reward like singers, quickly, and can look for nothing more. He spoke about himself half-pityingly under the style of "Luis o Captivo," was pious, fervent in sacred song, instant in prayer (especially if work was to be done), not

idle either, superstitious and affectionate with all the virtues of the most excellent Saint Bernard or Newfoundland dog, and with but little of the imperfections of a man except the power of speech. Often he had been with his master into Uruguay to purchase cattle, or to buy mules for the Brazilian market, and when I asked him if he did not know that he was free the instant that he stepped in Uruguay, said: "Yes, but here I was brought up when I first came from Africa; they have been kind to me, it is to me as the querencia[1] is to a horse, and were it not for that, small fear I should return, to remain here 'feito captivo'; but then I love the place, and, as you know, 'the mangy calf lived all the winter, and then died in the spring.'" He held the Christian faith in its entirety, doubting no dogma, being pleased with every saint, but yet still hankered after fetish, which he remembered as a child, and seemed to think not incompatible with Christianity, as rendering it more animistic and familiar, smoothing away its angularities, blotting whatever share of reason it may have away, and, above all, giving more scope, if possible, to faith, and thereby opening a larger field of possibilities to the believer's mind.

So Luis with others of his kind, as Jango, Jico, and Manduco, became our friends, looking upon us with that respect mixed with contempt which is the attitude of those who see that you possess the

[1] Accustomed pasture.

mysterious arts of reading and of writing, but cannot see a horse's footprint on hard ground; or if you lose yourself, have to avail yourself of what Luis referred to as "the one-handed watch the sailors use, which points the way to go."

Much did Xavier talk of the Indians of the woods, the "Bugres," as the Brazilians call them; about the "Botocudos," who wear a plug stuck in their lower lip, and shape their ears with heavy weights in youth, so that they hang upon their shoulders; and much about those "Infidel" who through a blowpipe direct a little arrow at the travelling "Christians" in the woods, whose smallest touch is death. It then appeared his father (fica agora na gloria) was a patriot, that is, 'twas he who extirpated the last of all the "Infidel" from the forests where they lived. Most graphically did he tell how the last Indians were hunted down with dogs, and in a pantomime he showed how they jumped up and fell when they received the shot, and putting out his tongue and writhing hideously, he imitated how they wriggled on the ground, explaining that they were worse to kill than is a tapir, and put his father and the other patriots to much unnecessary pain. And as he talked, the woods, the fields, the river and the plain bathed in the sun, which unlike that of Africa does not seem weary of its task, but shines unwearied, looking as it does on a new world and life, shimmered and blazed, great lizards drank its rays flattening

themselves upon the stones in ecstasy, humming-birds quivered at the heart of every flower; above the stream the dragon-flies hung poised; only some "Infidel" whom the patriots had destroyed seemed wanting, and the landscape looked incomplete without a knot of them in their high feather crowns stealthily stealing round a corner of the woods.

In the uncomprehended future, incomprehensible and strange, and harder far to guess at than the remotest semi-comprehended past, surely the Spanish travellers and their writings will have a value quite apart from that of any other books. For then the world will hold no "Bugres"; not a "Botocodo" will be left, and those few Indian and Negro tribes who yet persist will be but mere travesties of the whites: their customs lost, their lore, such as it was, despised; and we have proved ourselves wiser than the Creator, who wasted so much time creating beings whom we judged unfit to live, and then, in mercy to ourselves and Him, destroyed, so that no evidence of His miscalculated plan should last to shame Him when He thought of His mistake. So to this end (unknowingly) the missionary works, and all the Jesuits, those who from Paraguay through the Chiquitos, and across the Uruguay, in the dark Moxos, and in the forests of the Andes, gave their lives to bring as they thought life everlasting to the Indians—all were fools. Better by far instead of Bibles, lives of saints, water of

baptism, crucifixes, and all the tackle of their trade, that they had brought swords, lances, and a good cross-bow each, and gone to work in the true scientific way, and recognized that the right way with savages is to preach heaven to them and then despatch them to it, for it is barbarous to keep them standing waiting as it were, just at the portals of eternal bliss.

And as we lingered at Cruz Alta, Christmas drew near, and all the people began to make "pesebres," with ox and ass, the three wise men, the star of Bethlehem, the Redeemer (not of the Botocodos and the Bugres) swaddled and laid in straw. Herdsmen and negroes dismounted at the door, fastened their half-wild mules or horses carefully to posts, removed their hats, drawing them down over their faces furtively, and then walked in on tiptoe, their heavy iron spurs clanking upon the ground, to see the Wondrous Child. They lounged about the room, speaking in whispers as he might awake, and then departed silently, murmuring that it was "fermosisimo," and getting on their horses noiselessly were gone, and in a minute disappeared upon the plain. Then came the Novena with prayer and carols, the prayers read by Xavier himself out of a tattered book, all the assembled family joining with unction in the responses, and beating on their breasts. Luis and all the slaves joined in the carols lustily, especially in one sung in a minor key long-drawn-out as a

sailor's shanty, or a forebitter sung in a calm whilst waiting for a breeze. After each verse there was a kind of chorus calling upon the sinner to repent, bidding him have no fear but still hold on, and thus exhorting him—

"Chegai, Chegai, pecador, ão pe da cruz
Fica nosso Senhor."

Christmas Day found us all at mass in the little church, horses and mules being tied outside the door to the trees in the plaza, and some left hobbled, and all waiting as if St. Hubert was about to issue forth and bless them.

Painfully and long, the preacher dwelt upon the glorious day, the country people listening as it were new to them, and as if all the events had happened on the plain hard by. In the evening rockets announced the joyful news, and the stars shone out over the woods and plains as on the evening when the bright particular star guided the three sheikhs to some such place as was the rancho of our host.

Christmas rejoicings over, a month sped past and found us still, so to speak, wind-bound in the little town. No one would buy our horses, some of which died bitten by snakes. It was impossible to think of going on, and to return equally difficult, so that there seemed a probability of being obliged to pass a lifetime in the place. People began to look at us half in a kindly, half

contemptuous way, as people look in general upon those who fail, especially when they themselves have never tried to do anything at all but live, and having done it with considerable success look upon failure as a sort of minor crime, to be atoned for by humility, and to be reprobated after the fashion of adultery, with a half-deprecating laugh. Sometimes we borrowed ancient flint-lock guns and lay in wait for tapirs, but never saw them, as in the thick woods they move as silently as moles in sand, and leave as little trace. Luis told of how, mounted on a half-wild horse, he had long ago lassoed a tapir, and found himself and horse dragged slowly and invincibly towards a stream, the horse resisting terrified, the "gran besta"[1] apparently quite cool, so that at last he had to cut his lasso and escape from what he called the greatest peril of his life; he thought he was preserved partly by the interposition of the saints and partly by a "fetiço" which, in defiance of religion, he luckily had hanging round his neck.

Just when all hope was gone, and we thought seriously of leaving the horses to their fate, and pushing on with some of the best of them towards Rio, a man appeared upon the scene, and offered to buy them, half for money and half "a troco," that is barter, for it appeared he was a pawnbroker and had a house full of silver horse-gear, which

[1] The Brazilians call the tapir "O gran besta." The Guarani word is Mborebi.

had never been redeemed. After much bargaining we closed for three hundred dollars and a lot of silver bridles, spurs, whips, and other stuff, after reserving four of the best horses for ourselves to make our journey back. At the head of so much capital our spirits rose, and we determined to push on to Paraguay, crossing the Uruguay and Parana, ride through the Misiones, and at Asuncion, where I had friends, take ship; *aguas abajo*, for the River Plate. We paid our debts and bid good-bye to Xavier, his wife and sallow daughters, and to all the slaves; gave Luis a silver-mounted whip, bought some provisions, put on our silver spurs, bridles, and as much as possible of the silver gear we had become possessed of, and at daybreak, mounted upon a cream-and-white piebald, the "Bayo Overo," and a red bay known as the "Pateador," leading a horse apiece, we passed out of Xavier's "potrero," [1] and started on the road.

During the last few days at Xavier's we had taught the horses we intended to take to Paraguay to eat Indian corn, fastening them up without any other food all day, and putting salt into their mouths. The art once learnt, we had to stand beside them whilst they ate, to keep off chickens and pigs who drove them from their food, the horses being too stupid to help themselves. If I remember rightly, their ration was eight cobs, which we husked for them in our hands, blistering

[1] Potrero is a fenced pasture, from "potro," a colt.

our fingers in the process as they had been burned. But now the trouble of the process was repaid, the horses going strongly all day long. We passed out of the little plain, skirted a pine-wood, rode up a little hill, and saw the country stretching towards the Uruguay, a park-like prairie interspersed with trees. Cruz Alta, a white patch shining against the green-grey plain encircled with its woods, was just in sight, the church-tower standing like a needle in the clear air against the sky. Half a league more and it dropped out of view, closing the door upon a sort of half Bœotian Arcady, but remaining still a memory after twenty years, with all the little incidents of the three months' sojourn in the place fresh, and yet seeming as they had happened not to myself, but to a person I had met, and who had told the tale.

By easy stages we journeyed on, descending gradually towards the Uruguay, passing through country almost unpopulated, so large were the "fazendas," and so little stocked. In the last century the Jesuits had here collected many tribes of Indians, and their history, is it not told in the pages of Montoya Lozano, Padre Guevara, and the other chroniclers of the doings of the "Company," and to be read in the Archivo de Simancas, in that of Seville, and the uncatalogued "legajos" of the national library at Madrid? Throughout the country that we passed through, the fierce Paulistas had raided in times gone by, carrying off the

Christian Indians to be slaves. The Portuguese and Spaniards had often fought—witness the names "O matto[1] Portogues, O matto Castelhano," and the like, showing where armies had manœuvred, whilst the poor Indians waited like sheep, rejoicing when the butchers turned the knife at one another's throats. To-day all trace of Jesuits and Missions have long disappeared, save for a ruined church or two, and here and there a grassy mound called in the language of the country a "tapera,"[2] showing where a settlement had stood.

We camped at lonely ranchos inhabited, in general, by free negroes, or by the side of woods, choosing, if possible, some little cove in the wood, in which we tied the horses, building a fire in the mouth, laid down and slept, after concocting a vile beverage bought in Cruz Alta under the name of tea, but made I think of birch-leaves, and moistening pieces of the hard jerked beef in orange-juice to make it palatable.

So after five or six days of steady travelling, meeting, if I remember rightly, not a living soul upon the way, except a Gaucho from the Banda Oriental, who one night came to our fire, and seeing the horrible brew of tea in a tin-pot asked

[1] "Matto" is a wood in Portuguese, and at these two Mattos, tradition says, the rival armies had encamped.

[2] Except for the Gaelic "larach," I know no word in any language which exactly corresponds to "tapera," as indicating the foundations of a house grassed over.

for a little of the "black water," not knowing what it was, we reached the Uruguay. The river, nearly half-a-mile in breadth, flowed sluggishly between primeval woods, great alligators basked with their backs awash, flamingoes fished among the shallow pools, herons and cranes sat on dead stumps, vultures innumerable perched on trees, and in the purple bunches of the "seibos" humming-birds seemed to nestle, so rapid was their flight, and over all a darkish vapour hung, blending the trees and water into one, and making the "balsa," as it laboured over after repeated calls, look like the barque of Styx. Upon the other side lay Corrientes, once a vast mission territory, but to-day, in the narrow upper portion that we traversed, almost a desert, that is a desert of tall grass with islands of timber dotted here and there, and an occasional band of ostriches scudding across the plain.

Camped by a wood about a quarter of a league from a lonely rancho, we were astonished, just at even-fall, by the arrival of the owner of the house mounted upon a half-wild horse, a spear in his hand, escorted by his two ragged sons mounted on half-wild ponies, and holding in their hands long canes to which a broken sheep-shear had been fixed. The object of his visit, as he said, was to inquire if we had seen a tiger which had killed some sheep, but his suspicious glance made me think he thought we had designs upon his cattle, and he had come

to reconnoitre us ; but our offer of some of the Cruz Alta tea soon made us friends, and after drinking almost a quart of it, he said "Muy rico," and rode back to his house.

The third day's riding brought us to the little town of Candelaria, built on a high bank over the Parana. Founded on Candlemas Day in 1665, it was the chief town of the Jesuit missions. Here, usually, the "Provincial"[1] resided, and here the political business of their enormous territory was done. Stretching almost from Cruz Alta to within fifty leagues of Asuncion del Paraguay, and from Yapeyú upon the Uruguay almost to the "Salto de Guayra" upon the Parana, the territory embraced an area larger than many a kingdom, and was administered without an army, solely by about two hundred priests. The best proof of the success of their administration is that in these days the Indians, now to be numbered by a few thousand, were estimated at about two hundred thousand, and peopled all the country now left desolate, or which at least was desolate at the time of which I write. Even Azara,[2] a bitter opponent of their system, writes of the Jesuit rule—"Although the Fathers had supreme command, they used their power with a gentleness and moderation which one cannot but admire."[3]

[1] Called *Superior de las misiones.*

[2] Feliz de Azara, *Descripcion y Historia del Paraguay.*

[3] Es menester convenir, en que aunque los padres manda-

I leave to the economists, with all the reverend rabble rout of politicians, statistic-mongers and philanthropists, whether or not two hundred thousand living Indians were an asset in the world's property; and to the pious I put this question, If, as I suppose, these men had souls just as immortal as our own, might it not have been better to preserve their bodies, those earthly envelopes without which no soul can live, rather than by exposing them to all those influences which the Jesuits dreaded, to kill them off, and leave their country without population for a hundred years?

But at the time of which I write neither my partner nor I cared much for speculations of that kind, but were more occupied with the condition of our horses, for, by that time, the "Bayo Overo" and the "Pateador" were become part and parcel of ourselves, and we thought more about their welfare than that of all the Indians upon earth.

La Candelaria, at the time when we passed through, was fallen from its proud estate, and had become a little Gaucho country town with sandy streets and horses tied at every door—a barren sun-burnt plaza, with a few Japanese ash-trees and Paraisos; the "Commandancia" with the Argentine

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ban alli en todo, usaron de su autoridad con una suavidad y moderacion que no puede menos de admirarse.—Azara, *Historia del Paraguay*, Tom. 1, p. 282: Madrid 1847.

blue-and-white barred flag, and trade-mark rising sun, hanging down listlessly against the post, and for all remnants of the Jesuit sway, the college turned into a town-hall, and the fine church, which seemed to mourn over the godless, careless, semi-Gaucho population in the streets. Here we disposed of our spare horses, bidding them good-bye, as they had been old friends, and got the "Bayo Overo" and the "Pateador" shod for the first time in their lives, an operation which took the united strength of half-a-dozen men to achieve, but was imperative, as their feet, accustomed to the stoneless plains of Paraguay, had suffered greatly in the mountain paths. In Candelaria, for the first time for many months, we sat down to a regular meal, in a building called "El Hotel Internacional"; drank wine of a suspicious kind, and seemed to have arrived in Paris, so great the change to the wild camps beside the forests, or the nights passed in the lone ranchos of the hilly district of Brazil.

A balsa drawn by a tug-boat took us across the Parana, here more than a mile broad, to Ytapua, and upon landing we found ourselves in quite another world. The little Paraguayan town of Ytapua, called by the Jesuits Encarnacion, lay, with its little port below it (where my friend Enrico Clerici had his store), upon a plateau hanging above the stream. The houses, built of canes and thatched with straw, differed extremely from

the white "azotea" houses of the Candelaria on the other side. The people, dress, the vegetation, and the mode of life, differed still more in every aspect. The Paraguayan, with his shirt hanging outside his white duck trousers, bare feet, and cloak made of red cloth or baize, his broad straw hat and quiet manner, was the complete antithesis of the high-booted, loose-trousered, poncho-wearing Correntino, with his long knife and swaggering Gaucho air. The one a horseman of the plains, the other a footman of the forests; the Correntino brave even to rashness when taken man for man, but so incapable of discipline as to be practically useless as a soldier. The other as quiet as a sheep, and individually patient even to suffering blows, but once gathered together and instructed in the use of arms, as good a soldier, when well led, as it is possible to find; active and temperate, brave, and, if rather unintelligent, eager to risk his life at any time at the command of any of his chiefs. Such was the material from which Lopez, coward and grossly incompetent as he was, formed the battalions which for four years kept both Buenos Ayres and Brazil at bay, and only yielded when he himself was killed, mounted, as tradition has it, on the last horse of native breed left in the land.

But if the people and their dwellings were dissimilar, the countries in themselves were to the full at least as different. All through the upper part

of Corrientes the soil is black, and the country open, park-like prairie dotted with trees; in Ytapua and the surrounding district, the earth bright red, and the primeval forest stretches close to the water's edge. In Corrientes still the trees of the Pampas are occasionally seen, Talas and ñandubay with Coronillo and Lapacho; whereas in Paraguay, as by a bound, you pass to Curupay,[1] Tatané,[2] the Tarumá,[3] the Ñandipá,[4] the Jacaranda, and the Paratodo with its bright yellow flowers; whilst upon every tree lianas cling with orchidaceæ, known to the natives as "flowers of the air," and through them all flit great butterflies, humming-birds dart, and underneath the damp vegetation of the sub-tropics, emphorbiaceæ, solanaceæ, myrtaceæ, and flowers and plants to drive a thousand botanists to madness, blossom and die unnamed. Here, too, the language changed, and Guarani became the dominant tongue, which, though spoken in Corrientes, is there used but occasionally, but among Paraguayans is their native speech, only the Alcaldes, officers, and upper classes as a general rule (at that time) speaking Spanish, and even then with a strange accent and much mixed with Guarani.

Two days we passed in Ytapua resting our horses, and I renewed my friendship with Enrico Clerici, an Italian, who had served with Garibaldi,

[1] Piptadenia communis.
[2] Acacia maleolens.
[3] Vitex Taruma.
[4] Genipa Americana.

and who, three years ago, I had met in the same place and given him a silver ring which he reported galvanized, and was accustomed to lend as a great favour for a specific against rheumatism. He kept a pulperia, and being a born fighter, his delight was, when a row occurred (which he styled "una barulla de Jesu Cristo"), to clear the place by flinging empty bottles from the bar. A handsome, gentlemanlike man, and terrible with a bottle in his hand, whether as weapon of offence or for the purposes of drink; withal well educated, and no doubt by this time long dead, slain by his favourite weapon, and his place filled by some fat, double-entry Basque or grasping Catalan, or by some portly emigrant from Germany.

Not wishing to be confined within a house, a prey to the mosquitoes, we camped in the chief square, and strolling round about the town, I came on an old friend.

Not far outside the village a Correntino butcher had his shop, a little straw-thatched hut, with strings of fresh jerked beef festooning all the place; the owner stood outside dressed in the costume of a Gaucho of the southern plains. I did not know him, and we began to talk, when I perceived, tied underneath a shed, a fine, dark chestnut horse, saddled and bitted in the most approved of Gaucho style. He somehow seemed familiar, and the Correntino, seeing me looking at his horse, asked if I knew the brand, but looking at it I failed to

recognize it, when on a sudden my memory was lighted up. Three years ago, in an "estero"[1] outside Caapucú, at night, journeying in company with a friend, one Hermann, whose only means of communication with me was a jargon of Spanish mixed with "Plaat Deutsch," we met a Correntino, and as our horses mutually drowned our approach by splashing with their feet, our meeting terrified us both. Frightened, he drew his knife, and I a pistol, and Hermann lugged out a rusty sword, which he wore stuck through his horse's girths. But explanations followed, and no blood was shed, and then we drew aside into a little hillock, called in the language of the place an "albardon," sat down and talked, and asking whence he came was told from Ytapua. Now Ytapua was three days' journey distant on an ordinary horse, and I looked carefully at the horse, and wondered why his owner had ridden him so hard. He, I now saw, was the horse I had seen that night, and the Correntino recognized me, and laughing said he had killed a man near Ytapua, and was (as he said) "retreating" when he met me in the marsh. The horse, no doubt, was one of the best for a long journey I have ever seen, and after quoting to his owner that "a dark chestnut horse may die, but cannot

[1] "Estero" is the word used in Paraguay for a marsh. These marshes are generally hard at the bottom, so that you splash through them for leagues without danger, though the water is often up to the horse's girths.

tire,"[1] we separated, and, no doubt, for years afterwards our meeting was the subject of his talk.

No doubt the citizens of Ytapua were scandalized at our not coming to the town, and the Alcalde came to interview us, but we assured him that in virtue of a vow we slept outside, and in a moment all his fears were gone.

Striking right through the then desolated Misiones, passing the river Aguapey, our horses almost swimming, skirting by forests where red macaws hovered like hawks and parrots chattered; passing through open plains grown over here and there with Yatais,[2] splashing for hours through wet esteros, missing the road occasionally, as I had travelled it but once, and then three years ago, and at the time I write of huts were few and far between, and population scanty, we came, upon the evening of the second day, near to a place called Ñacuti. This was the point for which I had been making, for near it was an estancia[3] called the "Potrero San Antonio," the property of Dr. Stewart, a well-known man in Paraguay. Nature had seemed to work to make the place impregnable. On three sides of the land, which measured eight or ten miles in length on every side, forks of

[1] Alazan tostado antes muerto que cansado. The Arabs think highly of the dark chestnut. See the Emir Abdul Kader on Horsemanship.

[2] The Yatai is a dwarf palm. It is the Cocos Yatais of botanists.

[3] Cattle-farm.

a river ran, and at the fourth they came so close together that a short fence, not half-a-mile in length, closed up the circle, and cattle once inside were safe but for the tigers, which at that time abounded, and had grown so fierce by reason of the want of population that they sometimes killed horses or cows close to the door of the house. A short "picada," of about a quarter of a mile in length, cut through the wood, led to the gate. Through it in times gone by I often rode at night in terror, with a pistol in my hand, the heavy foliage of the trees brushing my hat, and thinking every instant that a tiger would jump out. One night when close up to the bamboo bars I heard a grunt, thought my last hour had come, fired, and brought something down; approached, and found it was a peccary; and then, tearing the bars down in a hurry, got to horse, and galloped nine miles to the house, thinking each moment that the herd of peccaries was close behind and panting for my blood.

On this occasion all was still; the passage through the orange trees was dark, their scent oppressive, as the leaves just stirred in the hot north wind, and fire-flies glistened to and fro amongst the flowers; great bats flew heavily, and the quarter of a mile seemed mortal, and as if it led to hell.

Nothing occurred, and coming to the bars we found them on the ground; putting them up we conscientiously cursed the fool who left them out

of place, and riding out into the moonlight, after a little trouble found the sandy, deep-banked trail which led up to the house. All the nine miles we passed by islands of great woods, peninsulas and archipelagos jutting out into the still plain, and all their bases swathed in white mists like water: the Yatais looked ghostly standing starkly in the grass; from the lagoons came the shrill croak of frogs, great moths came fluttering across our path, and the whole woods seemed filled with noise, as if the dwellers in them, silent through the day, were keeping holiday at night. As for the past two days we had eaten nothing but a few oranges and pieces of jerked beef, moistening them in the muddy water of the streams, our talk was of the welcome we should get, the supper, and of the comfortable time we then should pass for a few days to give our horses rest.

We passed the tiger-trap, a structure built after the fashion of an enormous mouse-trap, of strong bamboos; skirted along a wood in which an ominous growling and rustling made our horses start, and then it struck me as curious that there were no cattle feeding in the plain, no horses, and that the whole potrero seemed strangely desolate; but the house just showing at the edge of a small grove of peach-trees drove all these speculations out of my head: thinking upon the welcome, and the dinner, for we had eaten nothing since daybreak, and were fasting, as the natives say, from everything but sin,

we reached the door. The house was dark, no troop of dogs rushed out to bark and seize our horses' tails; we shouted, hammered with our whips, fired our revolvers, and nothing answered us.

Dismounting, we found everything bolted and barred, and going to the back, on the kitchen-hearth a few red embers, and thus knew that some one had been lately in the place. Nothing to eat, the woods evidently full of tigers, and our horses far too tired to start again, we were just about to unsaddle and lie down and sleep, when a white figure stole out from the peach-trees, and tried to gain the shelter of the corral some sixty yards away. Jumping on horseback we gave chase, and coming up with the fugitive found it to be a Paraguayan woman, who with her little daughter were the sole inhabitants, her husband having gone to the nearest village to buy provisions, and left her all alone, warning her earnestly before he left to keep the doors shut during the night on account of the tigers, and not to venture near the woods even in daylight till he should have come back. Finding herself confronted by two armed, mounted men, dressed in the clothes of Correntinos, who had an evil reputation in Paraguay, her terror was extreme. Her daughter, a little girl of eight or nine, crept out from behind a tree, and in a moment we were friends. Unluckily for us, she had no food of any kind, and but a little maté, which she pre-

pared for us. She then remembered that the trees were covered with peaches, and went out and gathered some, but they were hard as stones; nevertheless we ate a quantity of them, and having tied our horses close to the house, not twenty paces from the door, in long lush grass, we lay down in the verandah, and did not wake till it was almost noon. When we awoke we found the woman had been up betimes and gone on foot five or six miles away to look for food. She brought some mandioca, and two or three dozen oranges, and a piece of almost putrefied jerked beef, all which we ate as heartily as if it had been the most delicious food on earth.

To my annoyance I found my horse weak and dejected, and several large clots of dried-up blood under the hair of his mane, and saw at once a vampire bat had fixed upon him, and no doubt sucked almost a quart of blood. We washed him in a pond close to the house, and he got better, and after eating some of the hard and unripe peaches we again lay down to sleep. By evening the woman's husband had returned, and proved to be a little lame and withered-looking man, mounted upon a lean and skinny horse. He undertook to guide us to Asuncion, remarking that it was twenty years since he had seen the capital, but that he knew the road as if he was accustomed to go there every day. With a slight lapsus this turned out to be the case, and just at daybreak we left the Potrero

San Antonio, where once before I had passed a month roaming about the woods, waiting for tigers in a tree at night, and never thinking that, in three years' time, I should return and find it desolate. It seemed that Dr. Stewart, not finding the speculation pay, had sold his cattle, and his manager, one Oliver, a Californian "Forty-niner," and his Paraguayan wife, had removed to a place some twenty leagues away, upon the road towards Asuncion.

There we determined to go and rest our horses, and left the place, our guide Florencio's wife impressing on him to be sure and bring her back a little missal from the capital, and he, just like an Arab or an Indian leaving home, unmoved, merely observing that the folk in Asuncion were "muy ladino" (very cunning), and it behoved a Christian to take care.

A day's long march brought us near Santa Rosa, and our guide here fell into his first and only error on the road. Pursuing an interminable palm-wood, we came out upon a little plain, all broken here and there with stunted Yatais, then to our great disgust the road bifurcated, and our guide insisted on striking to the left, though I was almost certain it was wrong. After an hour of heavy ploughing through the sand, I suddenly saw two immense palm-trees about a league away upon the right, and luckily remembered that they stood one on each side of the old Jesuit church at Santa Rosa,

and after an hour of scrambling through a stony wood arrived at the crossing of the little river just outside the place. Girls carrying water-jars upon their heads, and dressed in long white shifts, embroidered round the neck with coarse black lace, were going and coming in a long procession to the stream. A few old men and about thirty boys composed almost the entire male population of the town. Women entirely ruled the roast, and managed everything, and, as far as I can now recall, did it not much more inefficiently than men. The curious wooden church, dark, and with overhanging eaves, and all the images of saints still left from Jesuit times in choir and nave, with columns hewn from the trunks of massive trees, stood in the centre of the village, which was built after the fashion of a miner's "row," or of a St. Simonian phalanstery, each dwelling at least a hundred feet in length, and all partitioned off in the inside for ten or fifteen families. The plaza was overgrown with grass, and on it donkeys played, chasing each other up and down, and sometimes running up the wooden steps of the great church, and stumbling down again. Those who had horses led them down to bathe, cut "pindo"[1] for them, rode them at evening time, and passed their time in dressing and in combing them to get them into condition for the Sunday's running at the ring, which sport introduced by the Jesuits has continued popular in all

[1] Cocos Australis.

the villages of the Misiones up to the present time. The women flirted with the men, who by their rarity were at a premium, gave themselves airs, and went about surrounded by a perpetual and admiring band. The single little shop, which contained needles, gunpowder, and gin, was kept by an Italian, who, as he told me, liked the place, lent money, was a professing and quite unabashed polygamist, and I have no doubt long ere this time has made a fortune, and retired to live at Genoa in the self-same green velvet suit in which he left his home.

In this Arcadia we remained some days, and hired several girls to bathe the horses, which they performed most conscientiously, splashing and shouting in the stream for hours at a time, and bringing back the horses clean, and garnished with flowers in their manes. I rode one day to see a village two or three leagues away, where report said some of the Jesuit books had been preserved; got lost, and passed the night in a small clearing, where a fat and well-cared-for-looking handsome roan horse was tied. On seeing me he broke his picket-rope, ran furiously four or five times round me in circles, and then advancing put his nostrils close to the nostrils of my horse, and seemed to talk to him. His owner, an old Paraguayan, lame from a wound received in jumping from a canoe on to the deck of a Brazilian ironclad, told me his horse had been with him far into the interior, and

for a year had never seen another horse. But, he said, "Tata Dios has given every animal its speech after its kind, and he is glad to see your horse, and is no doubt asking him the news."

During the night, I cannot say exactly what the two horses talked about, but the old Paraguayan talked for hours of his adventures in the lately terminated war. It appeared that he, with seven companions, thinking to take a Brazilian ironclad anchored in the Paraguay, concealed themselves in a small canoe, behind some drift-wood, and floating plants called "camalotes," drifted down with the stream, and coming to the ship jumped with a yell aboard. The Brazilians, taken by surprise, all ran below, and the poor Paraguayans thinking the ship was theirs, sat quietly down upon the deck to plan what they should do. Seeing them off their guard, some of the crew turned a gun upon them, and at the first fire killed six, and wounded my host, who sprang into the stream, and gained the bank, but most unluckily not on the Paraguayan side. As at that time the Chaco Indians, who had profited by the war to make invasions upon every side, killed every Christian, as my host said "sin perdon," so he remained half starving for a night and day. On the third morning, wounded as he was, and seeing he must starve or else be killed if seen by Indians, he got a fallen tree, and with great difficulty, and marvellously escaping the fierce fish who come like

wolves to the scent of blood, and unmolested by the alligators, he reached the other side. There he was found by some women, lying unconscious on the river-bank, was cured, and though scarred in a dozen places, and lame for life, escaped, as he informed me, by his devotion to San José, whom he described under the title of the "husband of the mother of our Lord."

In the morning he rode a league with me upon the way, and as we parted his horse neighed shrilly, reared once or twice, and plunged, and when we separated I looked back and saw the devotee of St. Joseph sitting as firmly as a centaur, as his horse loped along the sandy palm-tree-bordered trail. During our stay at Santa Rosa, which was an offshoot from the more important mission of Santa Maria de Fé, although they had no priest the people gathered in the church, the Angelus was rung at evening for the "oracion," and every one on hearing it took off his hat and murmured something that he thought apposite. Thus did ceremony, always much more important than mere faith, continue, and no doubt blessed the poor people to the full as much as if it had been duly sanctified by a tonsured priest, and consecrated by a rightly constituted offertory. We left the place with real regret, and to this day, when in our hurried life I dream of peace, my thoughts go back to the old Paraguayan Jesuit "capilla" lost in the woods of Morosimo, Curupay, and Yba-hai, and

with its two tall feathery palm-trees rustling above the desecrated church; to the long strings of white-robed women carrying water-jars, and to the old-world life, perhaps by this time altered and swept away, or yet again not altered, and passing still in the same quiet fashion as when we were there.

Little by little we left the relatively open country of the Misiones behind, and passing Ibyra-pucú, San Roque, and Ximenes, came to the river Tebicuary. We passed it in canoes, the horses swimming, with their backs awash and heads emerging like water-monsters, whilst an impassive Indian paddled in the stern, and a young girl stood in the bows wielding a paddle like a water-sprite. The river passed, we got at once into the forests, and followed winding and narrow paths, worn by the footsteps of the mules of ages so deeply that our heavy Gaucho spurs almost trailed on the ground, whilst overhead lianas now and then quite formed a roof, and in the heavy air winged animals of every kind made life a burden. At last, leaving the little town of Quiquyó upon the right, we emerged on to a high and barren plain near Caapucú. On the evening of the second day from where we crossed the river, we came to Caballero Punta, just underneath a range of flattish hills, and riding to the door at a sharp gallop, pulled up short, and found ourselves greeted by the ex-manager of the Potrero San Antonio, my friend the "Forty-niner," and for the first time for four months saw a familiar face.

Gentle and kindly, though quick on the trigger, as befitted one who had crossed the plains in '48 on foot, and with his whole possessions packed on a bullock, passing the Rocky Mountains alone, and through the hostile tribes at that time powerful and savage, John Oliver was one of those strange men who, having passed their lives in perils and privations, somehow draw from them that very kindliness which those living in what appear more favourable surroundings so often lack. Born somewhere in the Yorkshire Dales (these he remembered well), and as he thought "back somewhere in the twenties," he had suffered all his life from the strange fever which impels some men to search for gold. Not on the Stock Exchange, or any of those places where it might reasonably be expected to be found, but in Australia, California, Mexico, in short wherever life was hard, death easy, and experience to be gathered, he sought with pick and shovel, rocker and pan and cradle, the "yellow iron," as the Apaches used to call it, which sought and found after the fashion of his kind, enriches some one else. From California he had drifted to Peru, from thence to Chile, but finding silver-mining too laborious or too lucrative for his conversing, and hearing of a fertile diggings opened in the Republic of Uruguay, had migrated there, and arrived somehow in Paraguay to find that the enchantment of his life was done, and settled down to live. Tall, and with long grey hair hanging in Western fashion

down his back, a careful horseman after the style of the trappers of the West, his pale blue eyes looked out upon the world as with an air of doubt; yet he had served in San Francisco as a "vigilante," sojourned with Brigham Young in Salt Lake City, leaving as he confessed two or three wives among the saints, sat in Judge Lynch's court a dozen times, most probably had killed a man or two; still, to my fancy, if the meek are to inherit any portion of the earth, his share should not be small.

He made us welcome, and his wife waited upon us, never presuming to sit down and eat, but standing ready with a napkin fringed with lace, to wipe our hands, pressing the food upon us, and behaving generally as if she found herself in the presence of some strange beings of an unfamiliar race. He said he had no children and was glad of it, for he explained that "Juaneeter was a good woman, but 'uneddicated,' and he had never taken thoroughly to half-caste pups, though he remembered some born of a Pi-Ute woman, way back somewhere about the fifties, who he supposed by now were warriors, and had taken many scalps." His wife stood by, not understanding any English and but little Spanish, which he himself spoke badly, and their talk was held in a strange jargon mixed with Guarani, without a verb, without a particle, and yet sufficient for the two simple creatures whom a strange fate, or a discerning, ever-watchful Providence, had thus ordained to

meet. No books were in the place, except a Bible, which he read little of late years, partly from failing sight, and partly, as he said, because he had detected what seemed to him "exaggerations," chiefly in figures and as to the number of the unbelievers whom the Chosen People slew. Two days or more, for time was taken no account of in his house, we waited with him, talking late every night of Salt Lake, Brigham Young, the Mountain-meadows Massacre, Kit Carson, Cochise and Mangas Coloradas, and matters of that kind which interested him, and which, when all is said, are just as interesting to those attuned to them, as is polemical theology, theories of art, systems of jurisprudence, the origin of the Atoll Islands, or any of the wise futilities with which men stock their minds. We parted on the third or fourth, or perhaps the fifth or sixth day, knowing that we should never meet again, and taking off my silver spurs I gave them to him, and he presented me with a light summer poncho woven by his wife. Much did he thank me for my visit, and made me swear never to pass the district without stopping at his house. This I agreed to do, and if I pass again either by Caballero Punta or by Caapucú, I will keep faith; but he, I fear, will have deceived me, and in the churchyard of the "capilla," under a palm-tree, with a rough cross above him, I shall find my simple friend.

Three or four days of jogging steadily, passing

by Quindy, and through the short "estero" of Acaai, which we passed splashing for several hours up to the girths, brought us to Paraguari, which, with its saddle-shaped mountain overhanging it, stood out a mark for leagues upon the level plain. Seldom in any country have I seen a railway so fall into the landscape as did the line at the little terminus of this the only railway in all Paraguay. The war had left the country almost in ruins, business was at a standstill, food was scarce, and but for a bale or two of tobacco, and a hide-sack or two of yerba, the train went empty to and fro. But as the people always wanted to go to the capital in search of work, six or eight empty trucks were always sent with every train. On them the people (mostly women) swarmed, seated like flies, upon the top and sides, dangling their legs outside like people sitting on a wharf, talking incessantly, all dressed in white, and every one, down to the smallest children, smoking large cigars. Six hours the passage took, if all went well, the distance being under fifty miles. If aught went wrong, it took a day or more, and at the bridges the trucks were all unhooked and taken over separately, so rotten was the state of the whole line, and in addition every here and there bridges had been blown away during the war, and roughly rendered serviceable by shoring up with wood. To meet a train labouring and puffing through the woods, the people clustering like bees upon the trucks, the engineer seated

in shirt-sleeves, whilst some women stoked the fire, was much the same as it is to meet a caravan meandering across the sands. If you desired to talk with any one the train incontinently stopped the passengers got out, relit their cigarettes, the women begged, the time of day was passed, and curiosity thus satisfied you passed on upon the road, and the "Maquina-guazu,"[1] as it was called, pursued contentedly the jolting and uneven tenor of its way. We naturally despised it, though the conductor, scenting business, offered to take us and our horses at almost any price we chose.

By the Laguna Ypocarai we took our way; skirting along its eastern shores, then desolate, and the whole district almost depopulated, we passed by palm-groves and deserted mandioca patches, reed cottages in ruins, watched the flamingoes fishing in the lake, the alligators lying motionless, and saw an Indian all alone in a dug-out canoe, casting his line as placidly as he had lived before the coming of the Spaniards to the land. A red-blue haze hung on the waters of the lake, reflected from the bright red earth, peeping between the trees, and on the islands drifts of mist gave an effect as if the palms were parachutes dropped from balloons, or perhaps despatched from earth to find out whether in the skies there could be anything more lovely than this quiet inland sea. Close to the top end of the lake stands Aregua, once under the Mercenary friars of

[1] Guazu is big, in Guarani.

Asuncion, who, as Azara says, having made the people of the place work for them for near two hundred years, began to think they were indeed their slaves, till an official sent from Spain in 1783 gave them their liberty, and the Mercenaries (as he says) at once retreated in disgust. Here we fell in with a compatriot, who at our time of meeting him was drunk. He told us that he passed his time after the fashion of the patriarchs in the Old Testament, and on arriving at his house it seemed he was provided with several wives, but of the flocks and herds, and other trade-marks of his supposed estate, we saw no trace. Still he was hospitable, setting the women to cut down pindo for the horses, take them to water, bathe them, and finally to cook some dinner for ourselves. His chief complaint was that his wives were Catholics, and now and then trudged off to mass, and left him without any one to cook his food. I doubted personally if a change of creed would better things, but held my peace, seeing the man set store by the faith which he had learnt in youth and still said he practised, but, as far as I could see, only by cursing the religion of the people of the place. We left his house without regret, though he was hospitable and half drunk for nearly all the time that we were there, and started on our last day's march considerably refreshed by meeting one who in a foreign land, far from home ties and moral influences, yet still pursued the simple practice of the faith which he had learned at home.

Luque, upon its little hill, the Campo Grande, like a dry lake, surrounded by thick woods on every side, and then the Recoleta, we passed, and entering the red sandy road made at the conquest to move troops upon, we saw the churches of Asuncion only a league away. And yet we lingered, walking our horses slowly in the deep red sand, passing the strings of countrywomen with baskets on their heads, driving their donkeys packed with sugar-cane, and smoking as they went; we lingered, feeling that the trip was done; not that we minded that our fortunes were not made, but vaguely felt that for the last five months we had lived a time which in our lives we should not see again, and fearing rather than looking forward to all the approaching change. The horses too were fat, in good condition, had become old friends, knew us so well we never tied them, but all night in camp left them to feed, being certain that they would not stray; and thus to leave them at the end of a long trip seemed as unreasonable as to part from an old friend simply because death calls.

The road grew wider, passed through some scattered houses, buried in orange and guayaba trees, ran through some open patches where grew wild indigo and castor-oil plants, with a low palm-scrub, entered a rancheria just outside the town, and then turned to a sandy street which merged in a great market, where, as it seemed, innumerable myriads were assembled, all chattering at once, or

so it struck us coming from the open solitary plains and the dark silent woods. The lowness of the river having stopped the Brazilian mail-boat from coming down from Corumba, we put up at the "Casa Horrocks," the resort of all the waifs and strays storm-bound in Paraguay. The town buried in vegetation, the sandy streets, all of them water-courses after a night's rain, the listless life, the donkeys straying to and fro, the white-robed women, with their hair hanging down their backs, and cut square on the forehead after the style so usual amongst Iceland ponies, the great unfinished palaces, the squares with grass five or six inches high, and over all the reddish haze blending the palm-trees, houses, sandy streets, the river and the distant Chaco into a copper-coloured whole at sunset, rise to my memory like the reflection of a dream. A dream seen in a convex mirror, opening away from me as years have passed, the actual things, men, actions, and occurrences of daily life seem swollen in it at the far end of some perspective, but the impression of the whole fresh and clear-cut in memory, standing out as boldly as the last day when on the "Pateador" I had a farewell gallop on the beach. Adios, "Pateador," or "till so long"—horses will be born as good, better, ten thousand times more valuable, and dogs will eat them, but for myself, and for the owner of the "Bayo Overo," not all the coursers of the sun could stir the reminiscences of youth, of lonely camping-

grounds, long nights in drenching rain, struggles with wind, wild gallops in the dark; the hopes and fears of the five months when we went fortune-seeking, and by God's mercy failed in our search, as the mere mention of those names forgotten to all the world except ourselves.

Eight or ten days had passed away, and we grew quite familiar with the chief features of the place, having made acquaintance with the Brazilian officers of the army and the fleet, the German apothecary, with Dr. Stewart, the chief European of the place, when news came that the Brazilian mail-boat had at last arrived. We bade our friends good-bye, entrusted both our horses to the care of Horrocks, fed them ourselves for the last time, and went on board the ship; a coppery haze hung over everything, the heat raising a faint quivering in the air, the thick yellowish water of the stream lapping against the vessel's sides like oil, the boat shoved off, our friends perspiring in the sun raising a washed-out cheer. The vessel swung into the stream, her paddles turned, the great green flag with the orange crown imperial flapped at the jackstaff, and the town dropped rapidly astern.

A quarter of a league and the church towers, tall palm-trees, the unfinished palaces, and the great theatre began to fade into the haze. Then sheering a little to the left bank, the vessel passed a narrow tongue of land covered with grass, whereon two horses fed. As we drew nearer I saw they

were our own, and jumping on the taffrail shouted "Adios," at which they raised their heads, or perhaps raised them but at the snorting steamer, and as they looked we passed racing down stream, and by degrees they became dimmer, smaller, less distinct, and at the last melted and vanished into the reddish haze.

IN A GERMAN TRAMP

IN A GERMAN TRAMP

THE tall, flaxen-haired stewardess Matilda had finished cutting Schwartzbrod and had gone to bed. The Danish boarhound slept heavily under the lee of the chicken-coops, the six or seven cats were upon the cabin sofa, and with the wind from the south-west, raising a terrific sea, and sending showers of spray flying over the tops of the black rocks which fringed the town, the S.S. *Oldenburg* got under way and staggered out into the gut.

The old white city girt on the seaward side by its breakwater of tall black rocks, the houses dazzlingly white, the crenelated walls, the long stretch of sand, extending to the belt of grey-green scrub and backed in the distance by the sombre forest, lay in the moonlight as distinct and clear as it had been mid-day. Clearer perhaps, for the sun in a sandy landscape seems to blur the outlines which the moon reveals; so that throughout North Africa night is the time to see a town in all its beauty of effect. The wind lifting the sand, drifted it whistling through the standing rigging of the tramp, coating the scarce dried paint, and making paint, rigging, and everything on board feel

like a piece of shark-skin to the touch. The vessel groaned and laboured in the surface sea, and on the port quarter rose the rocks of the low island which forms the harbour, leaving an entrance of about half-a-mile between its shores and the rocks which guard the town.

West-south-west a little westerly, the wind ever increased; the sea lashed on the vessel's quarter, and in spite of the dense volumes of black smoke and showers of sparks flying out from the salt-coated smoke-stack, the tramp seemed to stand still. Upon the bridge the skipper screamed hoarsely in Platt-Deutsch down his connection-tube to the chief engineer; men came and went in dirty blue check cotton clothes and wooden shoes; occasionally a perspiring fireman poked his head above the hatch, and looking seaward for a moment, scooped off the sweat from his forefinger, muttered, "Gott freduma," and went below; even the Arab deck-hands, roused into activity, essayed to set a staysail, and the whole ship, shaken between the storm and the exertions of the crew, trembled and shivered in the yeasty sea. Nearer the rocks appeared, and the white town grew clearer, more intensely white, the sea frothed round the vessel, and the skipper advancing to a missionary seated silently gazing across the water with a pallid sea-green face, slapped him upon the back, and with an oath said, "Mister, will you have one glass of beer?" The Levite *in partibus*, clad in his black

alpaca Norfolk jacket, grey greasy flannel shirt and paper collar, with the whole man surmounted by the inevitable pith soup-tureen-shaped hat, the trade-mark of his confraternity, merely pressed both his hands harder upon his diaphragm and groaned. "One leetel glass beer, I have it from Olten, fifty dozen of it. Perhaps all to be wasted; have a glass beer, it will do your shtomag good." The persecuted United Presbyterian ambulant broke silence with one of those pious ejaculations which do duty (in the congregations) for an oath, and taking up his parable, fixing the pith tureen upon his head with due precaution, said, "Captain, ye see I am a total abstainer, joined in the Whifflet, and in addeetion I feel my stomach sort o' discomposed." And to him again, good Captain Rindelhaus rejoined, "Well, Mister Missionary, do you see dat rocks?" The Reverend Mr. McKerrochar, squinting to leeward with an agonizing stare, admitted that he did, but qualified by saying, "there was sic a halgh, he was na sure that they were rocks at all." "Not rocks! Kreuz-Sacrament, dose rocks you see are sharp as razors, and the back-wash off them give you no jance; I dell you, sheep's-head preacher, dat point de way like sign-board and not follow it oop himself, you better take glass beer in time, for if the schip not gathet headway in about five minutes you perhaps not get another jance." After this dictum, he stood looking into the night, his glass gripped in his left

hand, and in his right a half-smoked-out cigar, which he put to his mouth mechanically now and then, but drew no smoke from it. The missionary too looked at the rocks with increased interest, and the Arab pilot staggering up the ladder to the bridge stolidly pointed to the surf, and gave us his opinion, that "he, the captain and the faqui would soon be past the help of prayer," piously adding, "that it seemed Allah's will; although he thought the Kaffirs, sons of burnt Kaffirs, in the stoke-hole were not firing up."

With groans and heavings, with long shivers which came over her as the sea struck her on the beam, the vessel fought for her life, belching great clouds of smoke out into the clear night air. Captain and missionary, pilot and crew, stood gazing at the sea; the captain now and then yelling some unintelligible Platt-Deutsch order down the tube; the missionary fumbling with a Bible lettered "Polyglot," covered in black oil-cloth; and the pilot passing his beads between the fingers of his right hand, his eyes apparently not seeing anything; and it seemed as if another twenty minutes must have seen them all upon the rocks.

But Allah perhaps was on the watch; and the wind falling for an instant, or the burnt Kaffirs in the stoke-hole having struck a better vein of coal, the rusty iron sea-coffin slowly gathered headway, staggered as the engines driven to the highest pressure seemed to tear out her ribs, and forged

ahead. Then lurching in the sea, the screw occasionally racing with a roar, and the black decks dripping and under water, the scuppers being choked with the filth of years, she sidled out to sea, and rose and fell in the long rollers outside the harbour, which came in from the west. Rindelhaus set her on her course, telling the Arab helmsman in the pigeon-English which served them as a means of interchanging their few ideas, "to keep her head north and by west a little northerly, and let him know when they were abreast of Jibel Hadid;" adding a condemnation of the Arab race in general and the particular sailor, whom he characterized as a "tamned heaven dog, not worth his kraut." The sailor, dressed in loose Arab trousers and a blue jersey, the whole surmounted by a greasy fez, replied: "Yes, him know Jibel Hadid, captain, him keep her head north and by west all right," and probably also consigned the captain and the whole Germanic race to the hottest corner of Jehannum, and so both men were pleased. The boarhound gambolled on the deck, Matilda peeped up the companion, her dripping wooden shoes looking like waterlogged canoes, and the Scotch missionary began to walk about, holding his monstrous hat on with one hand and hugging the oilskin-covered "Polyglot" under his left arm. Crossing the skipper in his walk, in a more cheerful humour he ventured to remark: "Eh! captain, maybe I could mak' a shape at yon glass of beer

the now." But things had changed, and Rindelhaus looked at him with the usual uncondescending bearing of the seaman to the mere passenger, and said: "Nein, you loose your obbordunity for dat glass beer, my friend, and now I have to navigate my ship."

The *Oldenburg* pursued the devious tenor of her way, touching at ports which all were either open roadsteads or had bars on which the surf boiled with a noise like thunder; receiving cargo in driblets, a sack or two of marjoram, a bale of goatskins or of hides, two or three bags of wool, and sometimes waiting for a day or two unable to communicate until the surf went down. The captain spent his time in harbour fishing uninterestedly, catching great bearded spiky-finned sea-monsters which he left to die upon the deck. Not that he was hard-hearted, but merely unimaginative, after the way of those who, loving sport for the pleasure it affords themselves, hotly deny that it is cruel, or that it can occasion inconvenience to any participator in a business which they themselves enjoy. So the poor innocent sea-monsters floundered in slimy agony upon the deck; the boarhound and the cats taking a share in martyring them, tearing and biting at them as they gasped their lives away; condemned to agony for some strange reason, or perhaps because, as every living thing is born to suffer, they were enduring but their fair proportion, as they happened to be fish.

Pathetic but unwept, the tragedy of all the animals, and we but links in the same chain with them, look at it all as unconcerned as gods. But as the bearded spiky fish gasped on the deck the missionary tried to abridge their agony with a belaying-pin; covering himself with blood and slime, and setting up the back of Captain Rindelhaus, who vowed his deck should not be hammered "like a skidel alley, all for the sake of half-a-dozen fish, which would be dead in half-an-hour and eaten by the cats."

The marvels of our commerce, in the shape of Waterbury watches, scissors and looking-glasses, beads, Swiss clocks, and musical-boxes, all duly dumped, and the off-scouring of the trade left by the larger ships duly received on board, the *Oldenburg* stumbled out to sea if the wind was not too strong, and squirmed along the coast. Occasionally upon arrival at a port the sound of psalmody was heard, and a missionary boat put off to pass the time of God with their brother on the ship. Then came the greetings, as the whole party sat on the fiddlee gratings jammed up against the funnel; the latest news from the Cowcaddens and the gossip from along the coast was duly interchanged. Gaunt-featured girls, removed by physical conditions from all temptation, sat and talked with scraggy, freckled, and pith-hatted men. It was all conscience, and relatively tender heart, and as the moon lit up the dirty decks, they paraded up

and down, happy once more to be secure even for a brief space from insult, and to feel themselves at home. Dressed in white blouses, innocent of stays, with skirts which no belt known to milliners could ever join to the body or the blouse; with smaller-sized pith hats, sand-shoes and spectacles; their hands in Berlin gloves, and freckles reaching far down upon their necks, they formed a crushing argument in their own persons against polygamy. Still, in the main, all kindly souls, and some with a twinkle in their white-eyelashed steel-grey eyes, as of a Congregationalist bull-terrier, which showed you that they would gladly suffer martyrdom without due cause, or push themselves into great danger, out of sheer ignorance and want of knowledge of mankind. Life's misfits, most of them; their hands early inured to typewriting machines, their souls, as they would say, "sair hodden doon in prayer;" carefully educated to be ashamed of any scrap of womanhood they might possess. Still they were sympathetic, for sympathy is near akin to tears, and looking at them one divined they must have shed tears plentifully, enough to wash away any small sins they had committed in their lives.

The men, sunburnt yet sallow, seemed nourished on tinned meats and mineral table-waters; their necks scraggy and red protruded from their collars like those of vultures; they carried umbrellas in their hands from early habit of a wet climate, and seemed as if they had been chosen after much

cogitation by some unskilled commission, for their unfitness for their task.

They too, dogged and narrow-minded as they were, were yet pathetic, when one thought upon their lives. No hope of converts, or of advancement in the least degree, stuck down upon the coast, far off from Dorcas meetings, school-feasts, or anything which in more favoured countries whiles away the Scripture-reader's time; they hammered at their self-appointed business day by day and preached unceasingly, apparently indifferent to anything that passed, so that they got off their due quantity of words a day. In course of time, and after tea and bread-and-butter had been consumed, they got into their boat, struck up the tune of "Sidna Aissa Hobcum," and from the taffrail McKerrochar saw them depart, joining in the chorus lustily and waving a dirty handkerchief until they faded out of sight. Mr. McKerrochar, one of those Scottish professional religionists, whom early training or their own "damnable iteration" has convinced of all the doctrine that they preach, formed a last relic of a disappearing type. The antiquated out-and-out doctrine of Hell-fire and of Paradise, the jealous Scottish God, and the Mosaic Dispensation which he accepted whole, tinged slightly with the current theology of Airdrie or Coatbridge, made him a formidable adversary to the trembling infidel, in religious strife. In person he was tall and loosely built, his trousers bagging

at the knees as if a horse's hock had been inside the cloth. Wrong-headed as befits his calling, he yet saw clearly enough in business matters, and might have marked a flock of heathen sheep had he applied his business aptitude to his religious work, or on the other hand he might have made a fortune had he chanced to be a rogue. He led a joyless stirring life, striving towards ideals which have made the world a quagmire; yet worked towards them with that simple faith which makes a man ten thousand times more dangerous, in his muddle-headed course. Abstractions which he called duty, morality, and self-sacrifice, ruled all his life; forcing him ever onward to occupy himself with things which really he had no concern with; and making him neglect himself and the more human qualities of courtesy and love. And so he stood, waving his pocket-handkerchief long after the strains of "Sidna Aissa Hobcum" had melted into the night air; his arms still waving as the sails of windmills move round once or twice, but haltingly, after the wind has dropped. Perhaps that class of man seldom or never chews the cud either of sweet or bitter recollection; and if, as in McKerrochar's case, he is deprived of whisky in which to drown his cares, the last impression gone, his mind hammers away, like the keys of a loose typewriter under a weary operator's hands, half aimlessly, till circumstances place new copy under its roller, and it starts off again to work.

He might have gone on waving right through the dog-watch had not the captain with a rough ejaculation stopped his arm. "Himmel, what for a semaphore, Herr missionary, is dat; and you gry too, when you look at dat going-way boat . . . Well, have a glass of beer. I tell you it is not good to look at boats and gry for noddings, for men that have an ugly yellow beard like yours and mine."

"I was na greetin', captain," said the missionary, furtively wiping his face; "it was just ane of thae clinkers, I think thae ca' the things, has got into my eye."

"Glinkers, mein friend, do not get into people's eyes when der ship is anchored," Rindelhaus replied; "still I know as you feel, but not for missionary boats. You not know Oldenburg eh? Pretta place; not far from Bremerhaven. Oldenburg is one of the prettaest places in the world. I live dere. Hour and half by drain, oot from de port. I just can see the vessels' masts and the funnel smoke as they pass oop and down the stream. I think I should not care too much to live where man can see no ships. Yes, yes, ah, here come Matilda mit de beer. Mein herz, you put him down here on dis bale of marjoram, and you goes off to bed. I speak here mit de Herr missionary, who gry for noddings when he look at missionary boat go off into de night.

"Ah, Oldenburg, ja, yes, I live there. Meine

wife she live there, and meine littel Gretchen, she about den or twelve, I don't remember which. Prosit, Herr missionary, you have no wife; no littel Gretchen, eh? So, so, dat is perhaps better for a missionary."

The two sat looking at nothing, thinking in the painful ruminant way of semi-educated men, the captain's burly North-German figure stretched on a cane deck-chair. About a captain's age he was, that is, his beard had just begun to grizzle, and his nose was growing red, the bunions on his feet knotted his boots into protuberances, after the style of those who pass their lives about a deck. In height above six feet, broad-shouldered and red-faced, his voice of the kind with which a huntsman rates a dog, his clothes bought at a Bremerhaven slop-shop, his boots apparently made by a portmanteau-maker, and in his pocket was a huge silver keyless watch which he said was a "gronometer," and keep de Bremen time. Instant in prayer and cursing; pious yet blasphemous; kindly but brutal in the Teutonic way; he kicked his crew about as they had all been dogs, and yet looked after the tall stewardess Matilda as she had been his child; guarding her virtue from the assaults of passengers, and though alone with her in the small compass of a ship, respecting it himself.

After an interval he broke into his subject, just as a phonograph takes up its interrupted tale, as if against its will.

"So ja, yes, Oldenburg, pretta place; I not see it often though. In all eight years I never stay more to my house than from de morning Saturday to Monday noon, and dat after a four months' trip.

"Meine wife, she getting little sdout, and not mind much, for she is immer washing; washing de linen, de house, de steps; she wash de whole ship oop only I never let her come to see. The Gretchen she immer say, 'Father, why you not stop to home?' You got no littel Gretchen, eh? . . . Well, perhaps better so. Last Christmas I was at Oldenburg. Christmas eve I buy one tree, and then I remember I have to go to sea next morning about eleven o'clock. So I say nodings all the day, and about four o'clock the agent come and tell me that the company not wish me leave Oldenburg upon de Christmas day. Then I was so much glad I think I wait to eat meine Christmas dinner with meine wife, and talk with Gretchen in the evening while I smoke my pipe. The stove was burning, and the table stand ready mit sausage and mit bread and cheese, beer of course, and lax, dat lax they bring from Norway, and I think I have good time. Then I think on de company, what they say if I take favour from them and go not out to sea; they throw it in my teeth for ever, and tell me, 'Rindelhaus, you remember we was so good to you upon that Christmas day.' I tell the agent thank you, but say I go to sea. Meine wife she gry and I say nodings, nodings to Gretchen,

and sit down to take my tea. Morning, I tell my littel girl, then she gry bitterly and say, 'What for you go to sea?' I kiss meine wife and walk down to the quay; it just begin to snow; I curse the schelm sailors, de pilot come aboard, and we begin to warp into the stream. Just then I hear a running on the quay, like as a Friesland pony come clattering on the stones. I look up and see Gretchen mit her little wooden shoes. She run down to the ship, and say, 'Why you go sea, father, upon Christmas day?' and I not able to say nodings but just to wave my hand. We warp out into the stream, and she stand grying till she faded out of sight. Sometimes I feel a liddel sorry about dat Christmas day . . . But have another glass beer, Herr missionary, it always do me good." Wiping the froth from his moustache with his rough hand he went below, leaving the missionary alone upon the deck.

The night descended, and the ship shrouded in mist grew ghostly and unnatural, whilst great drops of moisture hung on the backstays and the shrouds.

The Arab crew lay sleeping, huddled round the windlass, looking mere masses of white dirty rags; the seaman keeping the anchor-watch loomed like a giant, and from the shore occasionally the voices of the guards at the town prison came through the mist, making the boarhound turn in his sleep and growl. The missionary paced to and fro a little,

settling his pith tureen-shaped hat upon his head, and fastening a woollen comforter about his neck.

Then going to the rail, he looked into the night where the boat bearing off his brethren had disappeared; his soul perhaps wandering towards some Limbo as he gazed, and his elastic-sided boots fast glued to the dirty decks by the half-dried-up blood of the discarded fish.

THE GOLD FISH

THE GOLD FISH

OUTSIDE the little straw-thatched *café* in a small courtyard trellised with vines, before a miniature table painted in red and blue, and upon which stood a dome-shaped pewter teapot and a painted glass half filled with mint, sat Amarabat, resting and smoking hemp. He was of those whom Allah in his mercy (or because man in the Blad-Allah has made no railways) has ordained to run. Set upon the road, his shoes pulled up, his waistband tightened, in his hand a staff, a palm-leaf wallet at his back, and in it bread, some hemp, a match or two (known to him as el spiritus), and a letter to take anywhere, crossing the plains, fording the streams, struggling along the mountain-paths, sleeping but fitfully, a burning rope steeped in saltpetre fastened to his foot, he trotted day and night—untiring as a camel, faithful as a dog. In Rabat as he sat dozing, watching the greenish smoke curl upwards from his hemp pipe, word came to him from the Khalifa of the town. So Amarabat rose, paid for his tea with half a handful of defaced and greasy copper coins, and took his way towards the white palace with the crenelated walls, which on the cliff, hanging

above the roaring tide-rip, just inside the bar of the great river, looks at Salee. Around the horseshoe archway of the gate stood soldiers, wild, fierce-eyed, armed to the teeth, descendants, most of them, of the famed warriors whom Sultan Muley Ismail (may God have pardoned him!) bred for his service, after the fashion of the Carlylean hero Frederic; and Amarabat walked through them, not aggressively, but with the staring eyes of a confirmed hemp-smoker, with the long stride of one who knows that he is born to run, and the assurance of a man who waits upon his lord. Some time he waited whilst the Khalifa dispensed what he thought justice, chaffered with Jewish pedlars for cheap European goods, gossiped with friends, looked at the antics of a dwarf, or priced a Georgian or Circassian girl brought with more care than glass by some rich merchant from the East. At last Amarabat stood in the presence, and the Khalifa, sitting upon a pile of cushions playing with a Waterbury watch, a pistol and a Koran by his side, addressed him thus:—

"Amarabat, son of Bjorma, my purpose is to send thee to Tafilet, where our liege lord the Sultan lies with his camp. Look upon this glass bowl made by the Kaffir, but clear as is the crystal of the rock; see how the light falls on the water, and the shifting colours that it makes, as when the Bride of the Rain stands in the heavens, after a shower in spring. Inside are seven gold fish, each

scale as bright as letters in an Indian book. The Christian from whom I bought them said originally they came from the Far East where the Djin-descended Jawi live, the little yellow people of the faith. That may be, but such as they are, they are a gift for kings. Therefore, take thou the bowl. Take it with care, and bear it as it were thy life. Stay not, but in an hour start from the town. Delay not on the road, be careful of the fish, change not their water at the muddy pool where tortoises bask in the sunshine, but at running brooks; talk not to friends, look not upon the face of woman by the way, although she were as a gazelle, or as the maiden who when she walked through the fields the sheep stopped feeding to admire. Stop not, but run through day and night, pass through the Atlas at the Glaui; beware of frost, cover the bowl with thine own haik; upon the other side shield me the bowl from the Saharan sun, and drink not of the water if thou pass a day athirst when toiling through the sand. Break not the bowl, and see the fish arrive in Tafilet, and then present them, with this letter, to our lord. Allah be with you, and his Prophet; go, and above all things see thou breakest not the bowl." And Amarabat, after the manner of his kind, taking the bowl of gold fish, placed one hand upon his heart and said: "Inshallah, it shall be as thou hast said. God gives the feet and lungs. He also gives the luck upon the road."

So he passed out under the horseshoe arch, hold-

ing the bowl almost at arm's length so as not to touch his legs, and with the palmetto string by which he carried it, bound round with rags. The soldiers looked at him, but spoke not, and their eyes seemed to see far away, and to pass over all in the middle distance, though no doubt they marked the smallest detail of his gait and dress. He passed between the horses of the guard all standing nodding under the fierce sun, the reins tied to the cantles of their high red saddles, a boy in charge of every two or three: he passed beside the camels resting by the well, the donkeys standing dejected by the firewood they had brought: passed women, veiled white figures going to the baths; and passing underneath the lofty gateway of the town, exchanged a greeting with the half-mad, half-religious beggar just outside the walls, and then emerged upon the sandy road, between the aloe hedges, which skirts along the sea. So as he walked, little by little he fell into his stride; then got his second wind, and smoking now and then a pipe of hemp, began, as Arabs say, to eat the miles, his eyes fixed on the horizon, his stick stuck down between his shirt and back, the knob protruding over the left shoulder like the hilt of a two-handed sword. And still he held the precious bowl from Franquestan in which the golden fish swam to and fro, diving and circling in the sunlight, or flapped their tails to steady themselves as the water danced with the motion of his steps. Never before in his experience had he

been charged with such a mission, never before been sent to stand before Allah's vicegerent upon earth. But still the strangeness of his business was what preoccupied him most. The fish like molten gold, the water to be changed only at running streams the fish to be preserved from frost and sun; and then the bowl: had not the Khalifa said at the last, "Beware, break not the bowl"? So it appeared to him that most undoubtedly a charm was in the fish and in the bowl, for who sends common fish on such a journey through the land? Then he resolved at any hazard to bring them safe and keep the bowl intact, and trotting onward, smoked his hemp, and wondered why he of all men should have had the luck to bear the precious gift. He knew he kept his law, at least as far as a poor man can keep it, prayed when he thought of prayer, or was assailed by terror in the night alone upon the plains; fasted in Ramadan, although most of his life was one continual fast; drank of the shameful but seldom, and on the sly, so as to give offence to no believer, and seldom looked upon the face of the strange women, Daughters of the Illegitimate, whom Sidna Mohammed himself has said, avoid. But all these things he knew were done by many of the faithful, and so he did not set himself up as of exceeding virtue, but rather left the praise to God, who helped his slave with strength to keep his law. Then left off thinking, judging the matter was ordained, and trotted, trotted over the burning plains, the gold fish

dancing in the water as the miles melted and passed away.

Duar and Kasbah, castles of the Caids, Arabs' black tents, suddra zaribas, camels grazing—antediluvian in appearance—on the little hills, the muddy streams edged all along the banks with oleanders, the solitary horsemen holding their long and brass-hooped guns like spears, the white-robed noiseless-footed travellers on the roads, the chattering storks upon the village mosques, the cow-birds sitting on the cattle in the fields—he saw, but marked not, as he trotted on. Day faded into night, no twilight intervening, and the stars shone out, Soheil and Rigel with Betelgeuse and Aldebaran, and the three bright lamps which the cursed Christians know as the Three Maries—called, he supposed, after the mother of their Prophet; and still he trotted on. Then by the side of a lone palm-tree springing up from a cleft in a tall rock, an island on the plain, he stopped to pray; and sleeping, slept but fitfully, the strangeness of the business making him wonder; and he who cavils over matters in the night can never rest, for thus the jackal and the hyena pass their nights talking and reasoning about the thoughts which fill their minds when men lie with their faces covered in their haiks, and after prayer sleep. Rising after an hour or two and going to the nearest stream, he changed the water of his fish, leaving a little in the bottom of the bowl, and dipping with his brass drinking-cup into the stream

for fear of accidents. He passed the Kasbah of el Daudi, passed the land of the Rahamna, accursed folk always in "siba," saw the great snowy wall of Atlas rise, skirted Marakesh, the Kutubieh, rising first from the plain and sinking last from sight as he approached the mountains and left the great white city sleeping in the plain.

Little by little the country altered as he ran: cool streams for muddy rivers, groves of almond-trees, ashes and elms, with grape-vines binding them together as the liana binds the canela and the urunday in the dark forests of Brazil and Paraguay. At mid-day, when the sun was at its height, when locusts, whirring through the air, sank in the dust as flying-fish sink in the waves, when palm-trees seem to nod their heads, and lizards are abroad drinking the heat and basking in the rays, when the dry air shimmers, and sparks appear to dance before the traveller's eye, and a thin, reddish dust lies on the leaves, on clothes of men, and upon every hair of horses' coats, he reached a spring. A river springing from a rock, or issuing after running underground, had formed a little pond. Around the edge grew bulrushes, great catmace, water-soldiers, tall arums and metallic-looking sedge-grass, which gave an air as of an outpost of the tropics lost in the desert sand. Fish played beneath the rock where the stream issued, flitting to and fro, or hanging suspended for an instant in the clear stream, darted into the dark recesses of the sides; and in

the middle of the pond enormous tortoises, horrid and antediluvian-looking, basked with their backs awash or raised their heads to snap at flies, and all about them hung a dark and fetid slime.

A troop of thin brown Arab girls filled their tall amphoræ whilst washing in the pond. Placing his bowl of fish upon a jutting rock, the messenger drew near. "Gazelles," he said, "will one of you give me fresh water for the Sultan's golden fish?" Laughing and giggling, the girls drew near, looked at the bowl, had never seen such fish. "Allah is great; why do you not let them go in the pond and play a little with their brothers?" And Amarabat with a shiver answered, "Play, let them play! and if they come not back my life will answer for it." Fear fell upon the girls, and one advancing, holding the skirt of her long shift between her teeth to veil her face, poured water from her amphora upon the fish.

Then Amarabat, setting down his precious bowl, drew from his wallet a pomegranate and began to eat, and for a farthing buying a piece of bread from the women, was satisfied, and after smoking, slept, and dreamed he was approaching Tafilet; he saw the palm-trees rising from the sand; the gardens; all the oasis stretching beyond his sight; at the edge the Sultan's camp, a town of canvas, with the horses, camels, and the mules picketed, all in rows, and in the midst of the great "duar" the Sultan's tent, like a great palace all of canvas,

shining in the sun. All this he saw, and saw himself entering the camp, delivering up his fish, perhaps admitted to the sacred tent, or at least paid by a vizier, as one who has performed his duty well. The slow match blistering his foot, he woke to find himself alone, the "gazelles" departed, and the sun shining on the bowl, making the fish appear more magical, more wondrous, brighter, and more golden than before.

And so he took his way along the winding Atlas paths, and slept at Demnats, then, entering the mountains, met long trains of travellers going to the south. Passing through groves of chestnuts, walnut-trees, and hedges thick with blackberries and travellers' joy, he climbed through vineyards rich with black Atlas grapes, and passed the flat mud-built Berber villages nestling against the rocks. Eagles flew by and moufflons gazed at him from the peaks, and from the thickets of lentiscus and dwarf arbutus wild boars appeared, grunted, and slowly walked across the path, and still he climbed, the icy wind from off the snow chilling him in his cotton shirt, for his warm Tadla haik was long ago wrapped round the bowl to shield the precious fish. Crossing the Wad Ghadat, the current to his chin, his bowl of fish held in one hand, he struggled on. The Berber tribesmen at Tetsula and Zarkten, hard-featured, shaved but for a chin-tuft, and robed in their "achnifs" with the curious eye woven in the skirt, saw he was a "rekass," or thought the

fish not worth their notice, so gave him a free road. Night caught him at the stone-built, antediluvian-looking Kasbah of the Glaui, perched in the eye of the pass, with the small plain of Teluet two thousand feet below. Off the high snow-peaks came a whistling wind, water froze solid in all the pots and pans, earthenware jars and bottles throughout the castle, save in the bowl which Amarabat, shivering and miserable, wrapped in his haik and held close to the embers, hearing the muezzin at each call to prayers; praying himself to keep awake so that his fish might live. Dawn saw him on the trail, the bowl wrapped in a woollen rag, and the fish fed with bread-crumbs, but himself hungry and his head swimming with want of sleep, with smoking "kief," and with the bitter wind which from El Tisi N'Glaui flagellates the road. Right through the valley of Teluet he still kept on, and day and night still trotting, trotting on, changing his bowl almost instinctively from hand to hand, a broad leaf floating on the top to keep the water still, he left Agurzga, with its twin castles, Ghresat and Dads, behind. Then rapidly descending, in a day reached an oasis between Todghra and Ferkla, and rested at a village for the night. Sheltered by palm-trees and hedged round with cactuses and aloes, either to keep out thieves or as a symbol of the thorniness of life, the village lay, looking back on the white Atlas gaunt and mysterious, and on the other side towards the brown Sahara, land of the palm-tree.

(Belad-el-Jerid), the refuge of the true Ishmaelite; for in the desert, learning, good faith, and hospitality can still be found—at least, so Arabs say.

Orange and azofaifa trees, with almonds, sweet limes and walnuts, stood up against the waning light, outlined in the clear atmosphere almost so sharply as to wound the eye. Around the well goats and sheep lay, whilst a girl led a camel round the Noria track; women sat here and there and gossiped, with their tall earthenware jars stuck by the point into the ground, and waited for their turn, just as they did in the old times, so far removed from us, but which in Arab life is but as yesterday, when Jacob cheated Esau, and the whole scheme of Arab life was photographed for us by the writers of the Pentateuch. In fact, the self-same scene which has been acted every evening for two thousand years throughout North Africa, since the adventurous ancestors of the tribesmen of to-day left Hadrumut or Yemen, and upon which Allah looks down approvingly, as recognizing that the traditions of his first recorded life have been well kept. Next day he trotted through the barren plain of Seddat, the Jibel Saghra making a black line on the horizon to the south. Here Berber tribes sweep in their razzias like hawks; but who would plunder a rekass carrying a bowl of fish? Crossing the dreary plain and dreaming of his entry into Tafilet, which now was almost in his reach not two days distant, the sun beating on his

head, the water almost boiling in the bowl, hungry and footsore, and in the state betwixt waking and sleep into which those who smoke hemp on journeys often get, he branched away upon a trail leading towards the south. Between the oases of Todghra and Ferkla, nothing but stone and sand, black stones on yellow sand; sand, and yet more sand, and then again stretches of blackish rocks with a suddra bush or two, and here and there a colocynth, bitter and beautiful as love or life, smiling up at the traveller from amongst the stones. Towards midday the path led towards a sandy tract all overgrown with sandrac bushes and crossed by trails of jackals and hyenas, then it quite disappeared, and Amarabat waking from his dream saw he was lost. Like a good shepherd, his first thought was for his fish; for he imagined the last few hours of sun had made them faint, and one of them looked heavy and swam sideways, and the rest kept rising to the surface in an uneasy way. Not for a moment was Amarabat frightened, but looked about for some known landmark, and finding none started to go back on his trail. But to his horror the wind which always sweeps across the Sahara had covered up his tracks, and on the stony paths which he had passed his feet had left no prints. Then Amarabat, the first moments of despair passed by, took a long look at the horizon, tightened his belt, pulled up his slipper heels, covered his precious bowl with a corner of his robe, and started doggedly back upon

the road he thought he traversed on the deceitful path. How long he trotted, what he endured, whether the fish died first, or if he drank, or, faithful to the last, thirsting met death, no one can say. Most likely wandering in the waste of sandhills and of suddra bushes he stumbled on, smoking his hashish while it lasted, turning to Mecca at the time of prayer, and trotting on more feebly (for he was born to run), till he sat down beneath the sun-dried bushes where the Shinghiti on his Mehari found him dead beside the trail. Under a stunted sandarac tree, the head turned to the east, his body lay, swollen and distorted by the pangs of thirst, the tongue protruding rough as a parrot's, and beside him lay the seven golden fish, once bright and shining as the pure gold when the goldsmith pours it molten from his pot, but now turned black and bloated, stiff, dry, and dead. Life the mysterious, the mocking, the inscrutable, unseizable, the uncomprehended essence of nothing and of everything, had fled, both from the faithful messenger and from his fish. But the Khalifa's parting caution had been well obeyed, for by the tree, unbroken, the crystal bowl still glistened beautiful as gold, in the fierce rays of the Saharan sun.

A HEGIRA

A HEGIRA

THE giant cypresses, tall even in the time of Montezuma, the castle of Chapultepec upon its rock (an island in the plain of Mexico), the panorama of the great city backed by the mountain range; the two volcanoes, the Popocatepetl and the Istacihuatl, and the lakes; the tigers in their cages, did not interest me so much as a small courtyard, in which, ironed and guarded, a band of Indians of the Apache tribe were kept confined. Six warriors, a woman and a boy, captured close to Chihuahua, and sent to Mexico, the Lord knows why; for generally an Apache captured was shot at once, following the frontier rule, which without difference of race was held on both sides of the Rio Grande, that a good Indian must needs be dead.

Silent and stoical the warriors sat, not speaking once in a whole day, communicating but by signs; naked except the breech-clout; their eyes apparently opaque, and looking at you without sight, but seeing everything; and their demeanour less reassuring than that of the tigers in the cage hard by. All could speak Spanish if they liked, some a word or two of English, but no one heard them

say a word in either tongue. I asked the nearest if he was a Mescalero, and received the answer: "Mescalero-hay," and for a moment a gleam shone through their eyes, but vanished instantly, as when the light dies out of the wire in an electric lamp. The soldier at the gate said they were "brutes"; all sons of dogs, infidels, and that for his part he could not see why the "Gobierno" went to the expense of keeping them alive. He thought they had no sense; but in that showed his own folly, and acted after the manner of the half-educated man the whole world over, who knowing he can read and write thinks that the savage who cannot do so is but a fool; being unaware that, in the great book known as the world, the savage often is the better scholar of the two.

But five-and-twenty years ago the Apache nation, split into its chief divisions of Mescaleros, Jicarillas, Coyoteros, and Lipanes, kept a great belt of territory almost five hundred miles in length, and of about thirty miles in breadth, extending from the bend of the Rio Gila to El Paso, in a perpetual war. On both sides of the Rio Grande no man was safe; farms were deserted, cattle carried off, villages built by the Spaniards, and with substantial brick-built churches, mouldered into decay; mines were unworkable, and horses left untended for a moment were driven off in open day; so bold the thieves, that at one time they had a settled month for plundering, which they called

openly the Moon of the Mexicans, though they did not on that account suspend their operations at other seasons of the year. Cochise and Mangas-Coloradas, Naked Horse, Cuchillo Negro, and others of their chiefs, were once far better known upon the frontiers than the chief senators of the congresses of either of the two republics; and in some instances these chiefs showed an intelligence, knowledge of men and things, which in another sphere would certainly have raised them high in the estimation of mankind.

The Shis-Inday (the people of the woods), their guttural language, with its curious monosyllable "hay" which they tacked on to everything, as "Oro-hay" and "plata-hay"; their strange democracy, each man being chief of himself, and owning no allegiance to any one upon the earth; all now have almost passed away, destroyed and swallowed up by the "Inday pindah lichoyi" (the men of the white eyes), as they used to call the Americans and all those northerners who ventured into their territory to look for "yellow iron." I saw no more of the Apaches, and except once, never again met any one of them; but as I left the place the thought came to my mind, if any of them succeed in getting out, I am certain that the six or seven hundred miles between them and their country will be as nothing to them, and that their journey thither will be marked with blood.

At Huehuetoca I joined the mule-train, doing

the twenty miles which in those days was all the extent of railway in the country to the north, and lost my pistol in a crowd just as I stepped into the train, some "lepero" having abstracted it out of my belt when I was occupied in helping five strong men to get my horse into a cattle-truck. From Huehuetoca we marched to Tula, and there camped for the night, sleeping in a "meson" built like an Eastern fondak round a court, and with a well for watering the beasts in the centre of the yard. I strolled about the curious town, in times gone by the Aztec capital, looked at the churches, built like fortresses, and coming back to the "meson" before I entered the cell-like room without a window, and with a plaster bench on which to spread one's saddle and one's rugs, I stopped to talk with a knot of travellers feeding their animals on barley and chopped straw, grouped round a fire, and the whole scene lit up and rendered Rembrandtesque by the fierce glow of an "ocote" torch. So talking of the Alps and Apennines, or, more correctly, speaking of the Sierra Madre, and the mysterious region known as the Bolson de Mapimi, a district in those days as little known as is the Sus to-day, a traveller drew near. Checking his horse close by the fire, and getting off it gingerly, for it was almost wild, holding the hair "mecate" in his hand, he squatted down, the horse snorting and hanging back, and setting rifle and "machete" jingling upon the saddle, he began to talk.

"Ave Maria purisima, had we heard the news?" What! a new revolution? Had Lerdo de Tejada reappeared again? or had Cortinas made another raid on Brownsville? the Indios Bravos harried Chihuahua? or had the silver "conduct" coming from the mines been robbed? "Nothing of this, but a voice ran (corria una voz) that the Apache infidels confined in the courtyard of the castle of Chapultepec had broken loose. Eight of them, six warriors, a woman and a boy, had slipped their fetters, murdered two of the guard, and were supposed to be somewhere not far from Tula, and, as he thought, making for the Bolson de Mapimi, the deserts of the Rio Gila, or the recesses of the mountains of the Santa Rosa range."

Needless to say this put all in the meson almost beside themselves; for the terror that the Indians inspired was at that time so real, that had the eight forlorn and helpless infidels appeared I verily believe they would have killed us all. Not that we were not brave, well armed—in fact, all loaded down with arms, carrying rifles and pistols, swords stuck between our saddle-girths, and generally so fortified as to resemble walking arsenals. But valour is a thing of pure convention, and these men who would have fought like lions against marauders of their own race, scarce slept that night for thinking on the dangers which they ran by the reported presence of those six naked men. The night passed by without alarm, as was to be expected, seeing

that the courtyard wall of the meson was at least ten feet high, and the gate solid "ahuehuete" clamped with iron, and padlocked like a jail. At the first dawn, or rather at the first false dawn, when the fallacious streaks of pink flash in the sky and fade again to night, all were afoot. Horsemen rode out, sitting erect in their peaked saddles, toes stuck out and thrust into their curiously stamped toe-leathers; their "chaparreras" giving to their legs a look of being cased in armour, their "poblano" hats, with bands of silver or of tinsel, balanced like halos on their heads.

Long trains of donkeys, driven by Indians dressed in leather, and bareheaded, after the fashion of their ancestors, crawled through the gate laden with "pulque," and now and then a single Indian followed by his wife set off on foot, carrying a crate of earthenware by a broad strap depending from his head. Our caravan, consisting of six two-wheeled mule-carts, drawn by a team of six or sometimes eight gaily-harnessed mules, and covered with a tilt made from the "istle," creaked through the gate. The great meson remained deserted, and by degrees, as a ship leaves the coast, we struck into the wild and stony desert country, which, covered with a whitish dust of alkali, makes Tula an oasis; then the great church sank low, and the tall palm-trees seemed to grow shorter; lastly church, palms and towers, and the green fields planted with aloes, blended together and

sank out of sight, a faint white misty spot marking their whereabouts, till at last it too faded and melted into the level plain.

Travellers in a perpetual stream we met journeying to Mexico, and every now and then passed a straw-thatched "jacal," where women sat selling "atole," that is a kind of stirabout of pine-nut meal and milk, and dishes seasoned hot with red pepper, with "tortillas" made on the "metate" of the Aztecs, to serve as bread and spoons. The infidels, it seemed, had got ahead of us, and when we slept had been descried making towards the north; two of them armed with bows which they had roughly made with sticks, the string twisted out of "istle," and the rest with clubs, and what astonished me most was that behind them trotted a white dog. Outside San Juan del Rio, which we reached upon the second day, it seemed that in the night the homing Mescaleros had stolen a horse, and two of them mounting upon him had ridden off, leaving the rest of the forlorn and miserable band behind. How they had lived so far in the scorched alkali-covered plains, how they managed to conceal themselves by day, or how they steered by night, no one could tell; for the interior Mexican knows nothing of the desert craft, and has no idea that there is always food of some kind for an Apache, either by digging roots, snaring small animals, or at the last resort by catching locusts or any other insect he can find. Nothing so easy as to conceal

themselves; for amongst grass eight or nine inches high, they drop, and in an instant, even as you look, are lost to sight, and if hard pressed sometimes escape attention by standing in a cactus grove, and stretching out their arms, look so exactly like the plant that you may pass close to them and be unaware, till their bow twangs, and an obsidian-headed arrow whistles through the air.

Our caravan rested a day outside San Juan del Rio to shoe the mules, repair the harness, and for the muleteers to go to mass or visit the "poblana" girls, who with flowers in their hair leaned out of every balcony of the half-Spanish, half-Oriental-looking town, according to their taste. Not that the halt lost time, for travellers all know that "to hear mass and to give barley to your beasts loses no tittle of the day."

San Juan, the river almost dry, and trickling thirstily under its red stone bridges; the fields of aloes, the poplars, and the stunted palms; its winding street in which the houses, overhanging, almost touch; its population, which seemed to pass their time lounging wrapped in striped blankets up against the walls, was left behind. The pulque-aloes and the sugar-canes grew scarcer, the road more desolate as we emerged into the "tierra fria" of the central plain, and all the time the Sierra Madre, jagged and menacing, towered in the west. In my mind's eye I saw the Mescaleros trotting like wolves all through the night along its base,

sleeping by day in holes, killing a sheep or goat when chance occurred, and following one another silent and stoical in their tramp towards the north.

Days followed days as in a ship at sea; the waggons rolling on across the plains; and I jogging upon my horse, half sleeping in the sun, or stretched at night half dozing on a tilt, almost lost count of time. Somewhere between San Juan del Rio and San Luis Potosi we learned two of the Indians had been killed, but that the four remaining were still pushing onward, and in a little while we met a body of armed men carrying two ghastly heads tied by their scalp-locks to the saddle-bow. Much did the slayers vaunt their prowess; telling how in a wood at break of day they had fallen in with all the Indians seated round a fire, and that whilst the rest fled, two had sprung on them, as they said, "after the fashion of wild beasts, armed one with a stick, and the other with a stone, and by God's grace," and here the leader crossed himself, "their aim had been successful, and the two sons of dogs had fallen, but most unfortunately the rest during the fight had managed to escape."

San Luis Potosi, the rainless city, once world-renowned for wealth, and even now full of fine buildings, churches and palaces, and with a swarming population of white-clothed Indians squatting to sell their trumpery in the great market-square, loomed up amongst its fringe of gardens, irrigated lands, its groves of pepper-trees, its palms, its

wealth of flowering shrubs ; its great white domes, giving an air of Bagdad or of Fez, shone in the distance, then grew nearer, and at last swallowed us up, as wearily we passed through the outskirts of the town, and halted underneath the walls.

The city, then an oasis in the vast plateau of Anáhuac (now but a station on a railway-line), a city of enormous distances, of gurgling water led in stucco channels by the side of every street, of long expanses of "adobe" walls, of immense plazas, of churches and of bells, of countless convents; hedged in by mountains to the west, mouth of the "tierra caliente" to the east, and to the north the stopping-place for the long trains of waggons carrying cotton from the States; wrapped in a mist as of the Middle Ages, lay sleeping in the sun. On every side the plain lapped like an ocean, and the green vegetation round the town stopped so abruptly that you could step almost at once from fertile meadows into a waste of whitish alkali.

Above the town, in a foothill of the Sierra Madre about three leagues away, is situated the "Enchanted City," never yet fouled by the foot of man, but yet existent, and believed in by all those who follow that best part of history, the traditions which have come down to us from the times when men were wise, and when imagination governed judgment, as it should do to-day, being the noblest faculty of the human mind. Either want of time, or that belittling education from which few can

escape, prevented me from visiting the place. Yet I still think if rightly sought the city will be found, and I feel sure the Mescaleros passed the night not far from it, and perhaps looking down upon San Luis Potosi cursed it, after the fashion that the animals may curse mankind for its injustice to them.

Tired of its squares, its long dark streets, its hum of people; and possessed perhaps with that nostalgia of the desert which comes so soon to all who once have felt its charm when cooped in bricks, we set our faces northward about an hour before the day, passed through the gates and rolled into the plains. The mules well rested shook their bells, the leagues soon dropped behind, the muleteers singing "La Pasadita," or an interminable song about a "Gachupin"[1] who loved a nun.

The Mescaleros had escaped our thoughts—that is, the muleteers thought nothing of them; but I followed their every step, saw them crouched round their little fire, roasting the roots of wild "mescal"; marked them upon the march in single file, their eyes fixed on the plain, watchful and silent as they were phantoms gliding to the north.

Crossing a sandy tract, the Capataz, who had long lived in the "Pimeria Alta," and amongst the Maricopas on the Gila, drew up his horse and

[1] It had a chorus reflecting upon convent discipline:

"For though the convent rule was strict and tight,
She had her exits and her entrances by night."

pointing to the ground said, "Viva Mexico!—look at these footmarks in the sand. They are the infidels; see where the men have trod; here is the woman's print and this the boy's. Look how their toes are all turned in, unlike the tracks of Christians. This trail is a day old, and yet how fresh! See where the boy has stumbled—thanks to the Blessed Virgin they must all be tired, and praise to God will die upon the road, either by hunger or some Christian hand." All that he spoke of was no doubt visible to him, but through my want of faith, or perhaps lack of experience, I saw but a faint trace of naked footsteps in the sand. Such as they were, they seemed the shadow of a ghost, unstable and unreal, and struck me after the fashion that it strikes one when a man holds up a cane and tells you gravely, without a glimmering of the strangeness of the fact, that it came from Japan, actually grew there, and had leaves and roots, and was as little thought of as a mere ash-plant growing in a copse.

At an "hacienda" upon the road, just where the trail leads off upon one hand to Matehuala, and on the other to Rio Verde, and the hot countries of the coast, we stopped to pass the hottest hours in sleep. All was excitement; men came in, their horses flecked with foam; others were mounting, and all armed to the teeth, as if the Yankees had crossed the Rio Grande, and were marching on the place. "Los Indios! si, señor," they had been

seen, only last night, but such the valour of the people of the place, they had passed on doing no further damage than to kill a lamb. No chance of sleep in such a turmoil of alarm; each man had his own plan, all talked at once, most of them were half drunk, and when our Capataz asked dryly if they had thought of following the trail, a silence fell on all. By this time, owing to the horsemen galloping about, the trail was cut on every side, and to have followed it would have tried the skill of an Apache tracker; but just then upon the plain a cloud of dust was seen. Nearer it came, and then out of the midst of it horses appeared, arms flashed, and when nearing the place five or six men galloped up to the walls, and stopped their horses with a jerk. "What news? have you seen anything of the Apaches?" and the chief rider of the gallant band, getting off slowly, and fastening up his horse, said, with an air of dignity, "At the 'encrucijada,' four leagues along the road, you will find one of them. We came upon him sitting on a stone, too tired to move, called on him to surrender, but Indians have no sense, so he came at us tired as he was, and we, being valiant, fired, and he fell dead. Then, that the law should be made manifest to all, we hung his body by the feet to a huisaché tree." Then compliments broke out and "Viva los valientes!" "Viva Mexico!" "Mueran los Indios salvajes!" and much of the same sort, whilst the five valiant men modestly took a drink, saying

but little, for true courage does not show itself in talk.

Leaving the noisy crew drinking confusion to their enemies, we rolled into the plain. Four dusty leagues, and the huisaché tree growing by four cross trails came into sight. We neared it, and to a branch, naked except his breech-clout, covered with bullet-wounds, we saw the Indian hang. Half-starved he looked, and so reduced that from the bullet-holes but little blood had run; his feet were bloody, and his face hanging an inch or two above the ground distorted; flies buzzed about him, and in the sky a faint black line on the horizon showed that the vultures had already scented food.

We left the nameless warrior hanging on his tree, and took our way across the plain, well pleased both with the "valour" of his slayers and the position of affairs in general in the world at large. Right up and down the Rio Grande on both sides for almost a thousand miles the lonely cross upon some river-side, near to some thicket, or out in the wide plain, most generally is lettered "Killed by the Apaches," and in the game they played so long, and still held trumps in at the time I write of, they, too, paid for all errors, in their play, by death. But still it seemed a pity, savage as they were, that so much cunning, such stoical indifference to both death and life, should always finish as the warrior whom I saw hang by the feet from the

huisaché, just where the road to Matehuala bifurcates, and the trail breaks off to El Jarral. And so we took our road, passed La Parida, Matehuala, El Catorce, and still the sterile plateau spread out like a vast sea, the sparse and stunted bushes in the constant mirage looming at times like trees, at others seeming just to float above the sand; and as we rolled along, the mules struggling and straining in the whitish dust, we seemed to lose all trace of the Apaches; and at the lone hacienda or rare villages no one had heard of them, and the mysterious hegira of the party, now reduced to three, left no more traces of its passing than water which has closed upon the passage of a fish.

Gomez Farias, Parras, El Llano de la Guerra, we passed alternately, and at length Saltillo came in sight, its towers standing up upon the plain after the fashion of a lighthouse in the sea; the bull-ring built under the Viceroys looking like a fort; and then the plateau of Anáhuac finished abruptly, and from the ramparts of the willow-shaded town the great green plains stretched out towards Texas in a vast panorama; whilst upon the west in the dim distance frowned the serrated mountains of Santa Rosa, and further still the impenetrable fastnesses of the Bolson de Mapimi.

Next day we took the road for Monterey, descending in a day by the rough path known as "la cuesta de los fierros," from the cold plateau to a land of palms, of cultivation, orange-groves, of

fruit-trees, olive-gardens, a balmy air filled with the noise of running waters; and passing underneath the Cerro de la Silla which dominates the town, slept peacefully far from all thoughts of Indians and of perils of the road, in the great caravansary which at that time was the chief glory of the town of Monterey. The city with its shady streets, its alameda planted with palm-trees, and its plaza all decorated with stuccoed plaster seats painted pale pink, and upon which during both day and night half of the population seemed to lounge, lay baking in the sun.

Great teams of waggons driven by Texans creaked through the streets, the drivers dressed in a "défroque" of old town clothes, often a worn frock-coat and rusty trousers stuffed into cowboy boots, the whole crowned with an ignominious battered hat, and looking, as the Mexicans observed, like "pantomimas, que salen en las fiestas." Mexicans from down the coast, from Tamaulipas, Tuxpan, Vera Cruz and Guatzecoalcos ambled along on horses all ablaze with silver; and to complete the picture, a tribe of Indians, the Kickopoos, who had migrated from the north, and who occasionally rode through the town in single file, their rifles in their hands, and looking at the shops half longingly, half frightened, passed along without a word.

But all the varied peoples, the curious half-wild, half-patriarchal life, the fruits and flowers, the

strangeness of the place, could not divert my thoughts from the three lone pathetic figures, followed by their dog, which in my mind's eye I saw making northward, as a wild goose finds its path in spring, leaving no traces of its passage by the way. I wondered what they thought of, how they looked upon the world, if they respected all they saw of civilized communities upon their way, or whether they pursued their journey like a horse let loose returning to his birthplace, anxious alone about arriving at the goal. So Monterey became a memory; the Cerro de la Silla last vanishing, when full five leagues upon the road. The dusty plains all white with alkali, the grey-green sage-bushes, the salt and crystal-looking rivers, the Indians bending under burdens, and the women sitting at the cross roads selling tortillas—all now had changed. Through oceans of tall grass, by muddy rivers in which alligators basked, by "bayous," "resacas," and by "bottoms" of alluvial soil, in which grew cotton-woods, black-jack, and post-oak, with gigantic willows; through countless herds of half-wild horses, lighting the landscape with their colours, and through a rolling prairie with vast horizons bounded by faint blue mountain chains, we took our way. Out of the thickets of "mezquite" wild boars peered upon the path; rattlesnakes sounded their note of warning or lay basking in the sun; at times an antelope bounded across our track, and the rare villages were fortified

with high mud walls, had gates, and sometimes drawbridges, for all the country we were passing through was subject to invasions of "los Indios Bravos," and no one rode a mile without the chance of an attack. When travellers met they zigzagged to and fro like battleships in the old days striving to get the "weather gauge," holding their horses tightly by the head, and interchanging salutations fifty yards away, though if they happened to be Texans and Mexicans they only glared, or perhaps yelled an obscenity at one another in their different tongues. Advertisements upon the trees informed the traveller that the place to stop at was the "Old Buffalo Camp" in San Antonio, setting forth its whisky, its perfect safety both for man and beast, and adding curtly it was only a short four hundred miles away. Here for the first time in our journey we sent out a rider about half-a-mile ahead to scan the route, ascend the little hills, keep a sharp eye on "Indian sign," and give us warning by a timely shot, all to dismount, "corral" the waggons, and be prepared for an attack of Indians, or of the roaming bands of rascals who like pirates wandered on the plains. Dust made us anxious, and smoke ascending in the distance set us all wondering if it was Indians, or a shepherd's fire; at halting time no one strayed far from camp, and we sat eating with our rifles by our sides, whilst men on horseback rode round the mules, keeping them well in sight, as shepherds watch their sheep.

About two leagues from Juarez a traveller bloody with spurring passed us carrying something in his hand; he stopped and held out a long arrow with an obsidian head, painted in various colours, and feathered in a peculiar way. A consultation found it to be "Apache," and the man galloped on to take it to the governor of the place to tell him Indians were about, or, as he shouted (following the old Spanish catchword), "there were Moors upon the coast."

Juarez we slept at, quite secure within the walls; started at daybreak, crossing the swiftly-running river just outside the town, at the first streak of light; journeyed all day, still hearing nothing of the retreating Mescaleros, and before evening reached Las Navas, which we found astir, all lighted up, and knots of people talking excitedly, whilst in the plaza the whole population seemed to be afoot. At the long wooden tables set about with lights, where in a Mexican town at sundown an al fresco meal of kid stewed in red pepper, "tamales" and "tortillas," is always laid, the talk was furious, and each man gave his opinion at the same time, after the fashion of the Russian Mir, or as it may be that we shall yet see done during debates in Parliament, so that all men may have a chance to speak, and yet escape the ignominy of their words being caught, set down, and used against them, after the present plan. The Mescaleros had been seen passing about a league outside

the town. A shepherd lying hidden, watching his sheep, armed with a rifle, had spied them, and reported that they had passed close to him; the woman coming last and carrying in her arms a little dog; and he "thanked God and all His holy saints who had miraculously preserved his life." After the shepherd's story, in the afternoon firing had been distinctly heard towards the small rancho of Las Crucecitas, which lay about three leagues further on upon the road. All night the din of talk went on, and in the morning when we started on our way, full half the population went with us to the gate, all giving good advice; to keep a good look-out, if we saw dust to be certain it was Indians driving the horses stolen from Las Crucecitas, then to get off at once, corral the waggons, and above all to put our trust in God. This we agreed to do, but wondered why out of so many valiant men not one of them proffered assistance, or volunteered to mount his horse and ride with us along the dangerous way.

The road led upwards towards some foothills, set about with scrubby palms; not fifteen miles away rose the dark mountains of the Santa Rosa chain, and on a little hill the rancho stood, flat-roofed and white, and seemingly not more than a short league away, so clear the light, and so immense the scale of everything upon the rolling plain. I knew that in the mountains the three Indians were safe, as the whole range was Indian territory; and as I

saw them struggling up the slopes, the little dog following them footsore, hanging down its head, or carried as the shepherd said in the "she-devil's" arms, I wished them luck after their hegira, planned with such courage, carried out so well, had ended, and they were back again amongst the tribe.

Just outside Crucecitas we met a Texan who, as he told us, owned the place, and lived in "korn-kewbinage with a native gal," called, as he said, "Pastory," who it appeared of all the females he had ever met was the best hand to bake "tortillers," and whom, had she not been a Catholic, he would have made his wife. All this without a question on our part, and sitting sideways on his horse, scanning the country from the corner of his eye. He told us that he had "had right smart of an Indian trouble here yesterday just about afternoon. Me and my 'vaquerys' were around looking for an estray horse, just six of us, when close to the ranch we popped kermash right upon three red devils, and opened fire at once. I hed a Winchester, and at the first fire tumbled the buck; he fell right in his tracks, and jest as I was taking off his scalp, I'm doggoned if the squaw and the young devil didn't come at us jest like grizzly bars. Wal, yes, killed 'em, o' course, and anyhow the young 'un would have growed up; but the squaw I'me sort of sorry about. I never could bear to kill a

squaw, though I've often seen it done. Naow here's the all-firedest thing yer ever heard; jes' as I was turning the bodies over with my foot a little Indian dog flies at us like a 'painter,' the varmint, the condemndest little buffler I ever struck. I was for shootin' him, but 'Pastory'—that's my 'kornkewbyne'—she up and says it was a shame. Wal, we had to bury them, for dead Injun stinks worse than turkey-buzzard, and the dodgasted little dog is sitting on the grave, 'pears like he's froze, leastwise he hastn't moved since sun-up, when we planted the whole crew."

Under a palm-tree not far from the house the Indians' grave was dug, upon it, wretched and draggled, sat the little dog. "Pastory" tried to catch it all day long, being kind-hearted though a "kornkewbyne"; but, failing, said "God was not willing," and retired into the house. The hours seemed days in the accursed place till the sun rose, gilding the unreached Santa Rosa mountains, and bringing joy into the world. We harnessed up the mules, and started silently out on the lonely road; turning, I checked my horse, and began moralizing on all kinds of things; upon tenacity of purpose, the futility of life, and the inexorable fate which mocks mankind, making all effort useless, whilst still urging us to strive. Then the grass rustled, and across an open space a small white object trotted, looking furtively around, threw

up its head and howled, ran to and fro as if it sought for something, howled dismally again, and after scratching in the ground, squatted dejectedly on the fresh-turned-up earth which marked the Indians' grave.

SIDI BU ZIBBALA

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RELIGIOUS persecution with isolation from the world, complete as if the Lebanon were an atoll island in the Paumotus group; a thousand years of slavery, and centuries innumerable of traditions of a proud past, the whole well filtered through the curriculum of an American missionary college, had made Maron Mohanna the strange compound that he was. Summer and winter dressed in a greasy black frock-coat, hat tilted on his head, as if it had been a fez; dilapidated white-topped mother-of-pearl bebuttoned boots, a shirt which seemed to come as dirty from the wash as it went there; his shoulders sloping and his back bent in a perpetual squirm, Mohanna shuffled through the world with the exterior of a pimp, but yet with certain aspirations towards a wild life which seldom are entirely absent from any member of the Arab race. So in his village of the Lebanon he grew to man's estate, and drifted after the fashion of his countrymen into a precarious business in the East. Half proxenete, half dragoman, servile to all above him and civil for prudence' sake to all below, he passed through the various degrees of hotel tout, seller of

cigarettes, and guide to the antiquities of whatever town he happened to reside in, to the full glory of a shop in which he sold embroideries, attar of roses, embroidered slippers and all the varied trash which tourists buy in the bazaars of the Levant. But all the time, and whilst he studied French and English with a view to self-advancement, the ancient glories of the Arab race were always in his mind. Himself a Christian of the Christians, reared in that hot-bed of theology the Lebanon, where all the creeds mutually show their hatred of each other, and display themselves in their most odious aspects; and whilst hating the Mohammedans as a first principle of his belief, he found himself mysteriously attracted to their creed. Not that his reason was seduced by the teachings of the Koran, but that somehow the stately folly of the whole scheme of life evolved by the ex-camel-driver appealed to him, as it has oftentimes appealed to stronger minds than his. The call to prayers, the half-contemplative, half-militant existence led by Mohammedans; the immense simplicity of their hegemony; the idea of a not impossible one God, beyond men's ken, looking down frostily through the stars upon the plains, a Being to be evoked without much hope of being influenced, took hold of him and set him thinking whether all members of the Arab race ought not to hold one faith. And in addition to his speculations upon faith and race, vaguely at times it crossed his mind, as I

believe it often crosses the minds of almost every Arab (and Syrians not a few), "If all else fail, I can retire into the desert, join the tribes and pass a pleasant life, sure of a wife or two, a horse, a lance, a long flint gun, a bowl of camel's milk, and a black tent in which to rest at night."

Little indeed are the chances of a young educated Syrian to make his living in the Lebanon. A certain modicum of the young men is always absorbed into the ranks of the various true faiths which send out missionaries to convert Arab-speaking races, and those so absorbed generally pass their lives preaching shamefacedly that which they partially believe, to those whose faith is fixed. Others again gravitate naturally to Cairo to seek for Government employment, or to write in the Arabic press, taking sides for England or for France, as the editors of the opposing papers make it worth their while. But the great bulk of the intellectual Syrian proletariat emigrates to New York and there lives in a quarter by itself, engaging in all kinds of little industries, dealing in Oriental curiosities, or publishing newspapers in the Arab tongue. There they pass much of their time lounging at their shop-doors with slippers down at heel, in smoking cigarettes, in drinking arrack, and in speculating when their native country shall be free.

To none of these well-recognized careers did Maron Mohanna feel himself impelled. Soon tiring of his shop he went to Egypt, worked on a

newspaper, and then became a teacher of Arabic to Europeans; was taken by one of them to London, where he passed some years earning a threadbare livelihood by translating Arabic documents and writing for the press. When out of work he tramped about the streets to cheat his hunger, and if in funds frequented music-halls, and lavished his hard-earned money on the houris who frequent such places, describing them as "fine and tall, too fond of drink, and perhaps colder in the blood than are the women of the East." Not often did his fortunes permit him such extravagances, and he began to pass his life hanging about the City in the wake of the impossible gang of small company-promoters, who in the purlieus of the financial world weave shoddy Utopias, and are the cause of much vain labour to postmen and some annoyance to the public, but who as far as I can see live chiefly upon hope deferred, for their prospectuses seem to be generally cast into the basket, from which no share list ever has returned. But in the darkest of poor Maron Mohanna's blackest days, his dreams about the Arab race never forsook him, and he studied much to master all the subtleties of his native tongue, talking with Arabs, Easterns, Persians, and the like in the lunch-room of the British Museum, where scholars of all nations, blear-eyed and bent, eat sawdust sandwiches and drink lemonade, whilst wearing out their eyes and lives for pittances which a dock labourer would

turn from in disgust. Much did the shivering Easterns confabulate, much did they talk of grammar, of niceties of diction, much did they dispute, often they talked of women, sometimes of horses, for on both all Easterns, no matter how they pass their lives, have much to say, and what they say is often worth attention, for in both matters their ancestors were learned when ours rode shaggy ponies, and their one miserable wife wrestled with fifteen fair-haired children in the damp forests where the Briton was evolved. How long Maron Mohanna dwelt in London is matter of uncertainty, to what abyss of poverty he fell, or if in the worst times he tramped the Embankment, sleeping on a bench and dreaming ever of the future of the Arab race, is not set down. The next act of his life finds him the trusted manager of the West African Company at Cape Juby. There he enjoyed a salary duly paid every quarter, and was treated with much deference by the employees as being the only man the company employed who could speak Arabic. Report avers he had embraced either the Wesleyan or the Baptist faith, as the chief shareholders of the affair were Nonconformists, whose ancestors having (as they alleged) enjoyed much persecution for their faith, were well resolved that every one who came within their power should outwardly, at least, conform to their own tenets in dogma and church government.

Established at Cape Juby, Maron Mohanna for

the first time enjoyed consideration, and for a while the world went well with him. He duly wrote reports, inspected goods, watched the arrival of the *Sahara*, the schooner which came once a month from Lanzarote, and generally endeavoured to discharge the duties of a manager, with some success. The chiefs Mohammed-wold-el-Biruc and Bu-Dabous, with others from the far-distant districts of El Juf, El Hodh, and from Tishit, all flattered him, offering him women from their various tribes and telling him that he too was of their blood. So by degrees either the affinity of race, the community of language or the provoking commonness of his European comrades, drew him to seek his most congenial friends amongst the natives of the place. Then came the woman: the woman who always creeps into the life of man as the snake crept into the garden by the Euphrates; and Mohanna knowing that by so doing he forfeited all chance of his career, gave up his post, married an Arab girl, and became a desert Arab, living on dates and camel's milk in the black Bedouin tents. Children he had, to whom, though desert-born, he gave the names of Christians, feeling perhaps the nostalgia of civilization in the wilds, as he had felt before the nostalgia of the desert, in his blood. And living in the desert with his hair grown long, dressed in the blue "baft" clothes, a spear in his hand and shod with sandals, he yet looked like a European clerk in masquerade.

The bushy plains stretched like an ocean towards the mysterious regions of El Juf and Timbuctoo, Wadan, Tijigja, Atar and Shingiet, and the wild steppes where the Tuaregs veiled to the eyes roam as they roamed before they hastened to the call of Jusuf-ibn Tachfin to invade El Andalos and lose the battle at Las Navas de Tolosa: the battle where San Isidro in a shepherd's guise guided the Christian host. Men came and went, on camels, horses, donkeys and on foot; all armed, all beggars, from the rich chief to the poorest horseman of the tribe; and yet all dignified, draped in their fluttering rags, and looking more like men than those whom eighteen centuries of civilization and of trade have turned to apes. Men fought, careering on their horses on the sand, firing their guns and circling round like gulls, shouting their battle-cries; men prayed, turning to Mecca at the appointed hours; men sat for hours half in a dream thinking of much or nothing, who can say; whilst women in the tents milked camels, wove the curious geometric-patterned carpets which they use, and children grew up straight, active and as fleet of foot as roe.

Inside the factory the European clerks smoked, drank, and played at cards: they learned no Arabic, for why should those who speak bad English struggle with other tongues? Meanwhile the time slipped past, leaving as little trace as does a jackal when on a windy day he sneaks across the sand. Only Maron Mohanna seemed to have no place in the

desert world which he had dreamed of as a boy; and in the world of Europe typified by the factory on the beach his place was lost. On marrying he had, of course, abjured the faith implanted in him in the Lebanon, and yet though now one of the "faithful" he found no resting-place. Neither of the two contending faiths had sunk much into his soul, but still at times he saw that the best part of any faith is but the life it brings. For him, though he had dreamed of it, the wild desert life held little charm; horses he loathed, suffering acutely when on their backs, and roaming after chance gazelles or ostriches with the horsemen of the tribe did not amuse him; but though too proud to change his faith again, at times he caught himself longing for his once-loathed shop in the Levant. So that clandestinely he grew to haunt the factory and the fort, as before, in secret, he had hung round the straw-thatched mosque, and loitered in the tents. His one amusement was to practise with a pistol at a mark, and by degrees he taught his wife to shoot, till she became a marksman able to throw an orange in the air and hit it with a pistol bullet three times out of five. But even pistol-shooting palled on his soul at last, and he grew desperate, not being allowed to leave the tribe or go into the fort except in company with others, and keenly watched as those who change their faith and turn Mohammedans are ever watched amongst the Arab race. But in his darkest hour fate smiled upon him, and

the head chief wanting an agent in the islands sent him to Lanzarote, and in the little town of Arrecife it seemed to him that he had found a resting-place at last. Once more he dressed himself in European clothes, he handled goods, saw now and then a Spanish newspaper a fortnight old; talked much of politics, lounged in the Alameda, and was the subject of much curiosity amongst the simple dwellers in the little town. Some said he had denied his God amongst the heathen; others again that he suffered much for conscience' sake; whilst he attended mass occasionally, going with a sense of doing something wrong, and feeling more enjoyment in the service than in the days of his belief. His wife dressed in the Spanish fashion, wore a mantilla, sometimes indeed a hat, and looked not much unlike an island woman, and was believed by all to have thrown off the errors of her faith and come into the fold.

But notwithstanding all the amenities of the island life, the unlimited opportunities for endless talk (so dear to Syrians), the half-malignant pleasure he experienced in dressing up his wife in Christian guise, sending for monstrous hats bedecked with paroquets from Cadiz, and gowns of the impossible shades of apple-green and yellow which in those days were sent from Paris to Spain and to her colonies, he yet was dull. And curiously enough, now that he was a double renegade his youthful dreams haunted him once again. He saw himself

(in his mind's eye) mounted upon his horse, flying across the sands, and stealthily and half ashamed he used to dress himself in the Arab clothes and sit for hours studying the Koran, not that he believed its teachings, but that the phraseology enchanted him, as it has always, both in the present and the past, bewitched all Arabs, and perhaps in his case it spoke to him of the illusory content which in the desert life he sought, but had not found.

He read the "Tarik-es-Sudan," and learned that Allah marks even the lives of locusts, and that a single pearl does not remain on earth by him unweighed. The Djana of Essoyuti, El Ibtihaj, and the scarce "Choice of Marvels" written in far Mossul by the learned Abu Abdallah ibn Abderrahim (he of Granada in the Andalos), he read; and as he read his love renewed itself for the old race whose blood ran in his veins. He read and dreamed, and twice a renegade in practice, yet remained a true believer in the aspirations of his youth. He sailed in schooners, running from island port to island port down the trade winds; landed at little towns, and hardly marked the people in the rocky streets, Spanish in language, and in type quite Guanche, and but a step more civilized than the wild tribesmen from the coast that he had left. Then thinking maybe of his sojourn in London, and its music-halls, frequented uninterestedly the house of Rita, Rita la Jerezana; sat in the courtyard under the fig-tree with its trunk coated with white-

wash, and listened to the "Cante Hondo," saw the girls dance Sevillanas; and drinking zarzaparilla syrup, learned that of all the countries in the world Spain is the richest, for there even the "women of the life" cast their accounts in ounces.

Then growing weary of their chatter and their tales of woe, each one of them being, according to herself, fallen from some high estate, he wandered to the convent of the Franciscan friars. They saw a convert in him, and put out all their theologic powers; displayed, as they know how, the human aspect of their faith, keeping the dogma out of sight; for well they knew, in vain the net is spread in the sight of any man, if the fires of hell are to be clearly seen. Long hours Mohanna talked with them, enjoying argument for its own sake after the Scottish and the Eastern way; the friars were mystified at the small progress that they made, but said the renegade spoke "as he had a nest of nightingales all singing in his mouth." And all the time his wife, an Arab of the Arabs, sighed for the desert, in her Spanish clothes. The "Velo de toalla" and the high-heeled shoes, the pomps and miseries of stays, and all the circumstance and starch of European dress, did not console her for the loss of the black tents, the familiar camels kneeling in the sand, the goats skipping about the "sudra" bushes; and the church bells made her but long more keenly for the call to prayers, rising at evening from the straw-thatched mosque. Her

children, left with the tribe, called to her from the desert, and she too found neither resting-place nor rest in the quiet island life.

At last Maron Mohanna turned again to trade, and entered into partnership with one Benito Florez; bought a schooner, and came and went between the islands and the coast. All things went well with him, and in the little island town "el renegado" rose to be quite a prosperous citizen, till on a day he and his partner quarrelled and went to law. The law in every country favours a man born in the land against a foreigner; and the partnership broke up, leaving Mohanna almost penniless. Whether one of those sudden furies which possess the Arabs, turning them in a moment and without warning from sedate well-mannered men to raving maniacs frothing at the mouth, came over him, he never told; but what is certain is that, having failed to slay his partner, he with his wife went off by night to where his schooner lay, and instantly induced his men to put to sea, and sailed towards the coast. Mohanna drew a perhaps judicious veil of mystery over what happened on his arrival at the inlet where his wife's tribe happened to be encamped. One of the islanders either objecting to the looting of the schooner upon principle, or perhaps because his share of loot was insufficient, got himself killed; but what is a "Charuta" more or less, except perhaps to his wife and family in Arrecife or in some little dusty town

in Pico or Gomera? Those who assented or were too frightened to protest found themselves unmolested, and at liberty to take the schooner back. Maron Mohanna and his wife, taking the boat rowed by some Arabs, made for the shore, and what ensued he subsequently related to a friend.

"When we get near the shore my wife she throw her hat." One sees the hideous Cadiz hat floating upon the surf, draggled and miserable, and its bunch of artificial fruit, of flowers or feathers, bobbing about upon the backwash of the waves. "She throw her boots, and then she take off all her clothes I got from Seville, cost me more than a hundred 'real'; she throw her parasol, and it float in the water like a buoy, and make me mad. I pay more than ten real for it. After all things was gone she wrap herself in Arab sheet and step ashore just like an Arab girl, and all the clothes I brought from Cadiz, cost more than a hundred real, all was lost." What happened after their landing is matter of uncertainty. Whether Mohanna found his children growing up semi-savages, whether his wife having thus sacrificed to the Graces, and made a holocaust of all her Cadiz clothes, regretted them, and sitting by the beach fished for them sadly with a cane, no man can tell.

Years passed away, and a certain English consul in Morocco travelling to the Court stopped at a little town. Rivers had risen, tribes had cut the road, our Lord the Sultan with his camp was on a

journey and had eaten up the food upon the usual road, or some one or another of the incidents of flood or field which render travel in Morocco interesting had happened. The town lay off the beaten track close to the territory of a half-wild tribe. Therefore upon arrival at the place the consul found himself received with scowling looks; no one proceeded to hostilities, but he remained within his tent, unvisited but by a soldier sent from the Governor to ask whether the Kaffir, son of a Kaffir, wished for anything. People sat staring at him, motionless except their eyes; children holding each other's hands stood at a safe distance from his tent, and stared for hours at him, and he remarked the place where he was asked to camp was near a mound which from time immemorial seemed to have been the common dunghill of the town. The night passed miserably, the guards sent by the Governor shouting aloud at intervals to show their vigilance, banished all chance of sleep.

Cursing the place, at break of day the consul struck his camp, mounted his horse, and started, leaving the sullen little town all wrapped in sleep. But as he jogged along disconsolately behind his mules, passing an angle of the "Kasbah" wall, a figure, rising as it seemed out of the dunghill's depths, advanced and stood before him in the middle of the way. Its hair was long and matted and its beard ropy and grizzled, and for sole covering it had a sack tied round its waist with a string

of camel's hair; and as the consul feeling in his purse was just about, in the English fashion, to bestow his alms to rid himself of trouble, it addressed him in his native tongue. "Good-morning, consul, how goes the world with you? You're the first Christian I have seen for years. My name was once Mohanna, now I am Sidi bu Zibbala, the Father of the Dunghill. Your poet Shakespeare say that all the world's a stage, but he was Englishman. I, Syrian, I say all the world dunghill. I try him, Syria, England, the Desert, and New York; I find him dung, so I come here and live here on this dunghill, and find it sweet when compared to places I have seen; and it is warm and dry."

He ceased; and then the consul, feeling his words an outrage upon progress and on his official status, muttered "Queer kind of fish," and jerking at his horse's bridle, proceeded doggedly upon his way.

LA PULPERIA

LA PULPERIA

IT may have been the Flor de Mayo, Rosa del Sur, or Tres de Junio, or again but have been known as the Pulperia upon the Huesos, or the Esquina on the Napostá. But let its name have been what chance or the imagination of some Neapolitan or Basque had given it, I see it, and seeing it, dismounting, fastening my "redomon" to the palenque, enter, loosen my facon, feel if my pistol is in its place, and calling out "Carlon," receive my measure of strong, heady red Spanish wine in a tin cup. Passing it round to the company, who touch it with their lips to show their breeding, I seem to feel the ceaseless little wind which always blows upon the southern plains, stirring the dust upon the pile of fleeces in the court, and whistling through the wooden "reja" where the pulpero stands behind his counter with his pile of bottles close beside him, ready for what may chance. For outward visible signs, a low, squat, mud-built house, surrounded by a shallow ditch on which grew stunted cactuses, and with paja brava sticking out of the abode of the overhanging eaves. Brown, sun-baked, dusty-looking, it stands up, an island in the sea of waving

hard-stemmed grasses which the improving settler passes all his life in a vain fight to improve away; and make his own particular estancia an Anglo-Saxon Eden of trim sheep-cropped turf, set here and there with "agricultural implements," broken and thrown aside, and though imported at great trouble and expense, destined to be replaced by ponderous native ploughs hewn from the solid ñandubay, and which, of course, inevitably prove the superiority of the so-called unfit. For inward graces, the "reja" before which runs a wooden counter at which the flower of the Gauchage of the district lounge, or sit with their toes sticking through their potro boots, swinging their legs and keeping time to the "cielito" of the "payador" upon his cracked guitar, the strings eked out with fine-cut thongs of mare's hide, by jingling their spurs.

Behind the wooden grating, sign in the Pampa of the eternal hatred betwixt those who buy and those who sell, some shelves of yellow pine, on which are piled ponchos from Leeds, ready-made calzoncillos, alpargatas, figs, sardines, raisins, bread —for bread upon the Pampa used to be eaten only at Pulperias—saddle-cloths, and in a corner the "botilleria," where vermuth, absinthe, square-faced gin, Carlon, and Vino Seco stand in a row, with the barrel of Brazilian caña, on the top of which the pulpero ostentatiously parades his pistol and his knife. Outside, the tracks led through the

biscacheras, all converging after the fashion of the rails at a junction; at the palenque before the door stood horses tied by strong raw-hide cabrestos, hanging their heads in the fierce sun, shifting from leg to leg, whilst their companions, hobbled, plunged about, rearing themselves on their hind-legs to jump like kangaroos.

Now and then Gauchos rode up occasionally, their iron spurs hanging off their naked feet, held by a raw-hide thong; some dressed in black bombachas and vicuña ponchos, their horses weighted down with silver, and prancing sideways as their riders sat immovable, but swaying from the waist upwards like willows in a wind. Others, again, on lean young colts, riding upon a saddle covered with sheepskin, gripping the small hide stirrup with their toes and forcing them up to the posts with shouts of "Ah bagual!" "Ah Pehuelche!" "Ahijuna!" and with resounding blows of their short, flat-lashed whips, which they held by a thong between their fingers or slipped upon their wrists, then grasping their frightened horses by the ears, got off as gingerly as a cat jumps from a wall. From the rush-thatched, mud-walled rancheria at the back the women, who always haunt the outskirts of a pulperia in the districts known as tierra adentro (the inside country), Indians and semi-whites, mulatresses, and now and then a stray Basque or Italian girl turned out, to share the quantity they considered love with all mankind.

But gin and politics, with horses' marks, accounts of fights, and recollections of the last revolution, kept men for the present occupied with serious things, so that the women were constrained to sit and smoke, drink maté, plait each other's hair (searching it diligently the while), and wait until Carlon with Vino Seco, square-faced rum, cachaza, and the medicated log-wood broth, which on the Pampa passes for "Vino Francés," had made men sensible to their softer charms. That which in Europe we call love, and think by inventing it that we have cheated God, who clearly planted nothing but an instinct of self-continuation in mankind, as in the other animals, seems either to be in embryo, waiting for economic advancement to develop it; or is perhaps not even dormant in countries such as those in whose vast plains the pulperia stands for club, exchange, for meeting-place, and represents all that in other lands men think they find in Paris or in London, and choose to dignify under the style of intellectual life. Be it far from me to think that we have bettered the Creator's scheme; or by the substitution of our polyandry for polygamy, bettered the position of women, or in fact done anything but changed and made more complex that which at first was clear to understand.

But, be that as it may and without dogmatism, our love, our vices, our rendering wicked things natural in themselves, our secrecy, our pruriency, adultery, and all the myriad ramifications of things

sexual, without which no novelist could earn his bread, fall into nothing, except there is a press-directed public opinion, laws, bye-laws, leaded type and headlines, so to speak, to keep them up. True, nothing of all this entered our heads as we sat drinking, listening to a contest of minstrelsy "por contrapunto" betwixt a Gaucho payador and a "matrero negro" of great fame, who each in turn taking the cracked "changango" in their lazo-hardened hands, plucked at its strings in such a style as to well illustrate the saying that to play on the guitar is not a thing of science, but requires but perseverance, hard finger-tips, and an unusual development of strength in the right wrist. Negro and payador each sang alternately; firstly old Spanish love songs handed down from before the independence, quavering and high; in which Frasquita rhymed to chiquita, and one Cupido, whom I never saw in Pampa, loma, rincon, bolson, or medano, in the Chañares, amongst the woods of ñandubay, the pajonales, sierras, cuchillas, or in all the land, figured and did nothing very special; flourished, and then departed in a high falsetto shake, a rough sweep of the hard brown fingers over the jarring strings forming his fitting epitaph.

The story of "El Fausto," and how the Gaucho, Aniceto, went to Buenos Ayres, saw the opera of "Faust," lost his puñal in the crush to take his seat, sat through the fearsome play, saw face to face the

enemy of man, described[1] as being dressed in long stockings to the stifle-joint, eyebrows like arches for tilting at the wing, and eyes like water-holes in a dry river bed, succeeded, and the negro took up the challenge and rejoined. He told how, after leaving town, that Aniceto mounted on his Overo rosao,[2] fell in with his "compadre," told all his wondrous tale, and how they finished off their bottle and left it floating in the river like a buoy.

The payador, not to be left behind, and after having tuned his guitar and put the "cejilla" on the strings, launched into the strange life of Martin Fierro, type of the Gauchos on the frontier, related his multifarious fights, his escapades, and love affairs, and how at last he, his friend, Don Cruz, saw on an evening the last houses as, with a stolen tropilla of good horses, they passed the frontier to seek the Indians' tents. The death of Cruz, the combat of Martin with the Indian chief—he with his knife, the Indian with the bolas—and how Martin slew him and rescued the captive woman, who prayed to heaven to aid the Christian, with

[1] "Medias hasta la berija
Con cada ojo como un charco,
Y cada ceja era un arco
Para correr la sortija."

[2] "En un overo rosao, flete lindo y parejito,
Cayo al bajo al trotecito, y lindamente sentao.
Un paisano del Bragao, de apelativo Laguna,
Mozo ginetazo ahijuna, como creo que no hay otro
Capaz a llevar un potro a sofrenarlo en la luna."

the body of her dead child, its hands secured in a string made out of one of its own entrails, lying before her as she watched the varying fortunes of the fight, he duly told. La Vuelta de Martin and the strange maxims of Tio Viscacha, that Pampa cynic whose maxim was never to ride up to a house where dogs were thin, and who set forth that arms are necessary, but no man can tell when, were duly recorded by the combatants, listened to and received as new and authentic by the audience, till at last the singing and the frequent glasses of Carlon made payador and negro feel that the time had come to leave off contrapunto and decide which was most talented in music, with their facons. A personal allusion to the colour of the negro's skin, a retort calling in question the nice conduct of the sister of the payador, and then two savages foaming at the mouth, their ponchos wrapped round their arms, their bodies bent so as to protect their vitals, and their knives quivering like snakes, stood in the middle of the room. The company withdrew themselves into the smallest space, stood on the tops of casks, and at the door the faces of the women looked in delight, whilst the pulpero, with a pistol and a bottle in his hands, closed down his grating and was ready for whatever might befall. "Negro," "Ahijuna," "Miente," "carajo," and the knives flash and send out sparks as the returns de tic au tac jar the fighters' arms up to the shoulder-joints. In a moment all is over, and from the payador's right

arm the blood drops in a stream on the mud floor, and all the company step out and say the negro is a "valiente," "muy guapeton," and the two adversaries swear friendship over a tin mug of gin. But all the time during the fight, and whilst outside the younger men had ridden races barebacked, making false starts to tire each other's horses out, practising all the tricks they knew, as kicking their adversary's horse in the chest, riding beside their opponent and trying to lift him from his seat by placing their foot underneath his and pushing upwards, an aged Gaucho had gradually become the centre figure of the scene.

Seated alone he muttered to himself, occasionally broke into a falsetto song, and now and then half drawing out his knife, glared like a tiger-cat, and shouted "Viva Rosas," though he knew that chieftain had been dead for twenty years.

Tall and with straggling iron-grey locks hanging down his back, a broad-brimmed plush hat kept in its place by a black ribbon with two tassels under his chin, a red silk Chinese handkerchief tied loosely round his neck and hanging with a point over each shoulder-blade, he stood dressed in his chiripa and poncho, like a mad prophet amongst the motley crew. Upon his feet were potro boots, that is the skin taken off the hind-leg of a horse, the hock-joint forming the heel and the hide softened by pounding with a mallet, the whole tied with a garter of a strange pattern woven by the Indians,

leaving the toes protruding to catch the stirrups, which as a domador he used, made of a knot of hide. Bound round his waist he had a set of ostrich balls covered in lizard skin, and his broad belt made of carpincho leather was kept in place by five Brazilian dollars, and through it stuck a long facon with silver handle shaped like a half-moon, and silver sheath fitted with a catch to grasp his sash. Whilst others talked of women or of horses, alluding to their physical perfections, tricks or predilections, their hair, hocks, eyes, brands or peculiarities, discussing them alternately with the appreciation of men whose tastes are simple but yet know all the chief points of interest in both subjects, he sat and drank. Tio Cabrera (said the others) is in the past, he thinks of times gone by; of the Italian girl whom he forced and left with her throat cut and her tongue protruding, at the pass of the Puán; of how he stole the Indian's horses, and of the days when Rosas ruled the land. Pucha, compadre, those were times, eh? Before the "nations," English, Italian and Neapolitan, with French and all the rest, came here to learn the taste of meat, and ride, the "maturangos," in their own countries having never seen a horse. But though they talked at, yet they refrained from speaking to him, for he was old, and even the devil knows more because of years than because he is the devil, and they knew also that to kill a man was to Tio Cabrera as pleasant an exercise as for

them to kill a sheep. But at last I, with the accumulated wisdom of my twenty years, holding a glass of caña in my hand, approached him, and inviting him to drink, said, not exactly knowing why, "Viva Urquiza," and then the storm broke out. His eyes flashed fire, and drawing his facon he shouted "Muera! . . . Viva Rosas," and drove his knife into the mud walls, struck on the counter with the flat of the blade, foamed at the mouth, broke into snatches of obscene and long-forgotten songs, as "Viva Rosas! Muera Urquiza dale guasca en la petiza," whilst the rest, not heeding that I had a pistol in my belt, tried to restrain him by all means in their power. But he was maddened, yelled, "Yes, I, Tio Cabrera, known also as el Cordero, tell you I know how to play the violin (a euphemism on the south pampa for cutting throats). In Rosas' time, Viva el General, I was his right-hand man, and have dispatched many a Unitario dog either to Trapalanda or to hell. Caña, blood, Viva Rosas, Muera!" then tottering and shaking, his knife slipped from his hands and he fell on a pile of sheepskins with white foam exuding from his lips. Even the Gauchos, who took a life as other men take a cigar, and from their earliest childhood are brought up to kill, were dominated by his brute fury, and shrank to their horses in dismay. The pulpero murmured "salvage" from behind his bars, the women trembled and ran to their "tolderia, holding each other by the hands, and the guitar-

players sat dumb, fearing their instruments might come to harm. I, on the contrary, either impelled by the strange savagery inherent in men's blood or by some reason I cannot explain, caught the infection, and getting on my horse, a half-wild "redomon," spurred him and set him plunging, and at each bound struck him with the flat edge of my facon, then shouting "Viva Rosas," galloped out furiously upon the plain.

HIGGINSON'S DREAM

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THE world went very well with Higginson; and about that time—say fifteen years ago—he found himself, his fortune made, settled down in Noumea. The group of islands which he had, as he said, rescued from barbarism, and in which he had opened the mines, made all the harbours, and laid out all the roads, looked to him as their Providence; and to crown the work, he had had them placed under the French flag. Rich, *décoré*, respected, and with no worlds to conquer in particular, he still kept adding wealth to wealth; trading and doing what he considered useful work for all mankind in general, as if he had been poor.

Strange that a kindly man, a cosmopolitan, half French, half English, brought up in Australia, capable, active, pushing, and even not devoid of that interior grace a speculative intellect, which usually militates against a man in the battle of his life, should think that roads, mines, harbours, havens, ships, bills of lading, telegraphs, tramways, a European flag, even the French flag itself, could compensate his islanders for loss of liberty. Stranger in his case than in the case of those who

go grown up with all the prejudices, limitations, circumscriptions and formalities of civilization become chronic in them, and see in savage countries and wild peoples but dumping ground for European trash, and capabilities for the extension of the Roubaix or the Sheffield trade; for he had passed his youth amongst the islands, loved their women, gone spearing fish with their young men, had planted taro with them, drunk kava, learned their language, and become as expert as themselves in all their futile arts and exercises; knew their customs and was as one of them, living their life and thinking it the best.

'Tis said (Viera, I think, relates it) that in the last years of fighting for the possession of Teneriffe, and when Alonso de Lugo was hard pressed to hold his own against the last Mencey, Bencomo, a strange sickness known as the "modorra" seized the Guanches and killed more of them than were slain in all the fights. The whole land was covered with the dead, and once Alonso de Lugo met a woman sitting on the hill-side, who called out, "Where are you going, Christian? Why do you hesitate to take the land? the Guanches are all dead." The Spanish chroniclers say that the sickness came about by reason of a wet season, and that, coming as it did upon men weakened by privation, they fell into apathy and welcomed death as a deliverer. That may be so, and it is true that in hill-caves even to-day in the lone valleys by

Icod el Alto their bodies still are found seated and with the head bowed on the arms, as if having sat down to mourn the afflictions of their race, God had been merciful for once and let them sleep. The chroniclers may have been right, and the wet season, with despair, starvation and the hardships they endured, may have brought on the mysterious "modorra," the drowsy sickness, under which they fell. But it needs nothing but the presence of the conquering white man, decked in his shoddy clothes, armed with his gas-pipe gun, his Bible in his hand, schemes of benevolence deep rooted in his heart, his merchandise (that is, his whisky, gin and cotton cloths) securely stored in his corrugated iron-roofed sheds, and he himself active and persevering as a beaver or red ant, to bring about a sickness which, like the "modorra," exterminates the people whom he came to benefit, to bless, to rescue from their savagery, and to make them wise, just, beautiful, and as apt to differentiate evil from good as even he himself. So it would seem, act as we like, our presence is a curse to all those people who have preserved the primeval instincts of our race. Curious, and yet apparently inevitable, that our customs seem designed to carry death to all the so-called inferior races, whom at a bound we force to bridge a period which it has taken us a thousand years to pass.

In his prosperity, and even we may suppose during the Elysium of dining with sous-préfets in

Noumea, and on the occasions when in Melbourne or in Sydney he once again consorted with Europeans, he always dreamed of a certain bay upon the coast far from Noumea, where in his youth he had spent six happy months with a small tribe, fishing and swimming, hunting, spearing fish, living on taro and bananas, and having for a friend one Tean, son of a chief, a youth of his own age. The vision of the happy life came back to him; the dazzling beach, the heavy foliage of the palao and bread-fruit trees; the grove of cocoa-nuts, and the zigzag and intricate paths leading from hut to hut, which when a boy he traversed daily, knowing them all by instinct in the same way that horses in wild countries know how to return towards the place where they were born. And still the vision haunted him; not making him unhappy, for he was one of those who find relief from thought in work, but always there in the same way that the remembrance of a mean action is ever present, even when one has made atonement, or induced oneself to think it was not really mean, but rendered necessary by circumstances; or, in fact, when we imagine we have put to sleep that inward grasshopper which in our bosoms, blood, brain, stomach, or wheresoever it is situated, is louder or more faint according to our state of health, digestion, weakness, or what it is that makes us hear its chirp.

And so it was that cheap champagne seemed flat to him; the company of the yellow-haired and

faded *demi-mondaines* whom Paris dumps upon New Caledonia insipid; the villas on the cliff outside Noumea vulgar; and the prosperity and progress of the place to which he had so much contributed, profitless and stale. Not that for a single instant he stopped working, planning and improving his estates, or missed a chance to acquire "town lots," or if a profitable 10,000 acres of good land with river frontage came into the market, hesitated for a moment to step in and buy. Now, though by this time he had long got past the need of actually trading with the natives at first hand, and kept, as rich men do, captains and secretaries and lawyers to do his lying for him, and only now and then would condescend to exercise himself in that respect when the stake was large enough to make the matter reputable, yet sometimes he would take a cruise in one of his own schooners and play at being poor. Nothing so tickles a man's vanity as to look back upon his semi-incredible past, and talk of the times when he had to live on sixpence a day, and to recount his breakfast on a penny roll and glass of milk, and then to put his hands upon his turtle-bloated stomach, smile a fat smile and say, "Ah, those were the days, then I was happy!" although he knows that at that halcyon period he was miserable, not perhaps so much from poverty, as from that envy which is as great a curse to poor men as is indigestion to the rich.

So running down the coast of New Caledonia in

a schooner, trading in pearls and copra, he came one evening to a well-remembered bay. All seemed familiar to him, the low white beach, tall palm-trees, coral reef with breakers thundering over it, and the still blue lagoon inside the clump of bread-fruit trees, the single tall grey stone just by the beach all graven over with strange characters, all struck a chord long dormant in his mind. So telling his skipper to let go his anchor, he rowed himself ashore. On landing he was certain of the place; the tribe, about five hundred strong, ruled over by the father of his friend Tean, lived right along the bay, and scattered in palm-thatched huts throughout the district. Then he remembered a certain cocoa-nut palm he used to climb, a spring of water in a thicket of hibiscus, a little stream which he used to dam, and then divert the course to take the fish, and sitting down, all his past life came back to him. As he himself would say, "C'était le bon temps; pauvre Tean il doit être Areki (chef) maintenant; sa sœur peut-être est morte ou mariée . . . elle m'aimait bien . . ."

But this day-dream dispelled, it struck him that the place looked changed. Where were the long low huts in front of which he used to pass his idle hours stretched in a hammock, the little taro patches? The zigzag paths which used to run from house to house across the fields to the spring and to the turtle-pond were all grown up. Couch-grass and rank mimosa scrub, with here and there

ropes of lianas, blocked them so that he rubbed his eyes and asked himself, Where is the tribe? Vainly he shouted, cooeed loudly; all was silent, and his own voice came back to him muffled and startling as it does when a man feels he is alone. At last, following one of the paths less grown up and obliterated than the rest, he entered a thick scrub, walked for a mile or two cutting lianas now and then with his jack-knife, stumbling through swamps, wading through mud, until in a little clearing he came upon a hut, in front of which a man was digging yams. As many of the natives in New Caledonia speak English and few French, he called to him in English, "Where black man?" Resting upon his hoe, the man replied, "All dead." "Where Chief?" And the same answer, "Chief, he dead." "Tean, he dead?" "No, Tean Chief; he ill, die soon; Tean inside that house." And Higginson, not understanding, but feeling vaguely that his dream was shattered in some way he could not understand, called out, "Tean, oh, Tean, your friend Johnny here!" Then from the hut emerged a feeble man leaning upon a long curved stick, who gazed at him as he had seen a ghost. At last he said, "That you, John? I glad to see you once before I die." Whether they embraced, shook hands, rubbed noses, or what their greeting was is not recorded, for Higginson, in alluding to it, always used to say, "C'est bête, mais le pauvre homme me faisait de la peine."

This was his sickness. "Me sick, John; why you wait so long? you no remember, so many years ago when we spear fish, you love my sister, she dead five years ago . . . When me go kaikai (eat) piece sugar-cane, little bit perhaps fall on the ground, big bird he come eat bit of sugar-cane and eat my life."

Poor Higginson being a civilized man, with the full knowledge of all things good and evil contingent on his state, still was dismayed, but said, "No, Tean, I get plenty big gun; you savey when I shoot even a butterfly he fall. I shoot big bird so that when you go kaikai he no eat pieces, and you get well again." Thus Higginson from his altitude argued with the semi-savage, thinking, as men will think, that even death can be kept off with words. But Tean smiled and said, "Johnny, you savey heap, but you no savey all. This time I die. You go shoot bird he turn into a mouse, and mouse eat all I eat, just the same bird." This rather staggered Higginson, and he felt his theories begin to vanish, and he began to feel a little angry; but really loving his old friend, he once more addressed himself to what he now saw might be a hopeless task.

"I go Noumea get big black cat, beautiful cat, all the same tiger—you savey tiger, Tean?—glossy and fat, long tail and yellow eyes; when he see mouse he eat him; you go bed sleep, get up, and soon quite well." Tean, who by this time had changed position with his friend, and become out of his

knowledge a philosopher, shook his head sadly and replied, "You no savey nothing, John; when black man know he die there is no hope. Suppose cat he catch mouse, all no use; mouse go change into a big, black cloud, all the same rain. Rain fall upon me, and each drop burn right into my bones. I die, John, glad I see you; black man all die, black woman no catch baby, tribe only fifty 'stead of five hundred. We all go out, all the same smoke, we vanish, go up somewhere, into the clouds. Black men and white men, he no can live. New Caledonia (as you call him) not big enough for both."

What happened after that Higginson never told, for when he reached that point he used to break out into a torrent of half French, half English oaths, blaspheme his gods, curse progress, rail at civilization, and recall the time when all the tribe were happy, and he and Tean in their youth went spearing fish. And then bewildered, and as if half-conscious that he himself had been to blame, would say, "I made the roads, opened the mines, built the first pier, I opened up the island; ah, le pauvre Tean, il me faisait de la peine . . . et sa sœur morte . . . she was so pretty with a hibiscus wreath . . . ah, well, pauvre petite . . . je l'aimais bien."

CALVARY

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JUST where the River Plate, split by a hundred islands, forms a sort of delta, a tract of marshy land in Entre Rios, known as the Rincones of the Ibicuy, spreads out flat, cut by a thousand channels, heavily timbered, shut in upon the landward side by a long range of hills of dazzling sand, and buried everywhere in waving masses of tall grass.

Grass, grass, and yet more grass. Grass at all seasons of the year, so that the half-wild horses never know the scarcity of pasture which in the winter makes them lean and rough upon the outside plains. A district shut by its sand-hills and the great river from the outer world. A paradise for horses, cattle, tigers, myriads of birds, for capibaras, nutrias, and for the stray Italians who now and then come from the cities with a rotten boat, and miserable, cheap, Belgian gun, to slaughter ducks.

The population, sparse and indolent, a hybrid breed between the Gauchos and the Chanar Indians, who at the conquest retreated into the thickest swamps and islands of the River Plate. But still a country where life flows easily away amongst the cane-brakes, thickets of espinillo, tala and ñandubay, and where from out the pajonales the half-

wild horses bound like antelopes, shaking their manes, their tails aloft like flags, snorting and frisking in the pride of strength, and lighting up the landscape with their variegated colours like a herd of fallow deer. A land of vegetation so intense as to bedwarf mankind almost as absolutely as we bedwarf ourselves with our machinery in a manufacturing town. Air plants upon the trees; oven-birds' earthen, gourd-like nests hanging from boughs; great wasp nests in the hollows of the trunks; scarlet and rose-pink flamingoes fishing in the shallow pools; nutrias floating down the streams, their round and human-looking heads appearing just awash; and the dark silent channels of the stagnant backwaters, so thickly grown with water weeds that by throwing a few branches on the top a man may cross his horse.

Commerce, that vivifying force, that bond of union between all the basest instincts of the basest of mankind, that touch of lower human nature which makes all the lowest natures of mankind akin, was quite unknown. Cheating was elementary, and rarely did much harm but to the successful cheat; at times a neighbour passed a leaden dollar on a friend, was soon detected, and was branded as a thief; at times a man slaughtered a neighbour's cow, and sold the hide, stole a good horse, or perpetrated some piece of petty villainy, sufficient by its transparent folly to reassure the world that he was quite uncivilized, and not fit by his exertions ever to grow rich.

Adultery and fornication were frequent, and, again, chiefly concerned the principals, as there were no self-instituted censors, eager to carry tales, and to revenge themselves upon the world for their own impotency.

All were apt lazoers, great with the bolas, and all rode as they had issued from their mothers' wombs mounted upon a foal, and grown together with him, half horse, half man—quiet and almost blameless centaurs, and as happy as it is possible for men to be who come into the world ready baptized in tears.

So much for man in the Rincones of the Ibicuy, and let us leave him quiet and indolent, fighting occasionally at the "Pulperia" for a quart of wine, for jealousy, for politics, or any of the so-called reasons which make men shed each other's blood.

But commerce, holy commerce, thrice blessed nexus which makes the whole world kin, reducing all men to the lowest common multiple; commerce that curses equally both him who buys and him who sells, and not content with catching all men in its ledgers, envies the animals their happy lives, was on the watch. Throughout the boundaries of the River Plate, from Corrientes to the bounds of Tucuman, San Luis de la Punta to San Nicholas, and to the farthest limits of the stony southern plains, nowhere were horses cheaper than in the close Rincones of the Ibicuy. Three, four, or five, or at the most six dollars, bought the best,

especially if but half-tamed, and a convenient curve of the river allowed a steamboat to discharge or to load goods, tied to a tree and moored beside the bank.

Upon a day a steamer duly arrived, whistled, and anchored, and from her, in a canoe, appeared a group of men who landed, and with the assistance of a guide went to the chief estancia of the place. The owner, Cruz Cabrera, called also Cruz el Narigudo, came to his door, welcomed them, driving off his dogs, wondered, but still said nothing, as it is not polite to ask a stranger what is the business that brings him to your house. Maté went round, and gin served in a square-faced bottle, and drank out of a solitary wine-glass, the stem long snapped in the middle, and spliced by shrinking a piece of green cow-hide round a thin cane, and fastening the cane into a disc of roughly-shaped soft wood. "Three dollars by the cut, and I'll take fifty." "No, four and a half; my horses are the best of the whole district." And so the ignoble farce of bargaining, which from the beginning of the world has been the touchstone of the zero of the human heart, pursued its course.

At last the "higgling of the market"—God-descended phrase—dear to economists and those who in their studies apart from life weave webs in which mankind is caught, decreed that at four dollars the deal was to be made. But at the moment of arrangement one of the strangers saw a fine chestnut colt standing saddled at the door, and

claimed him as a "sweetener," and to save talk his master let him go, and then, the money counted over, the buyer, prepared to give a hand to catch the horses, and to lead them singly to the boat. Plunging and snorting, sweating with terror, and half dead with fear, kicked, cuffed, and pricked with knives, horse after horse was forced aboard, and stood tied to a ring or stanchion, the sweat falling in drops like rain from legs and bellies on the deck. Only the chestnut stood looking uneasily about, and frightened by the struggles and the sound of blows falling upon the backs of those his once companions in the wild gallops through the forest glades, who had been forced aboard.

Then Cruz Cabrera cursed his folly with an oath, and getting for the last time on his back made him turn, passage, plunge, and started and checked him suddenly, then getting off unsaddled him, and gave his halter to a man to lead him to the ship. The horse resisted, terrified at the strange unusual sight, and one of the strangers, raising his iron whip, struck him across the nose, exclaiming with an oath, "I'll show you what it is to make a fuss, you damned four dollars' worth, when once I get you safe aboard the ship." And Cruz Cabrera, gripping his long knife, was grieved, and said much as to the chastity of the stranger's mother, and of his wife, but underneath his breath, not that he feared to cut a "gringo's" throat, but that the dollars kept him quiet, as they have rendered dumb, priests, ministers of state, bishops and merchants, princes and peasants,

and have closed the mouths of three parts of mankind, making them silent complices in all the villainies they see and hate, and still dare not denounce, fearing the scourge of poverty, and the smart lash which Don Dinero flourishes over the shoulders of all those who venture even remotely to express their thoughts.

Quickly the Ibicuy melted into the mist, as the wheezy steamer grunted and squattered like a wounded wild duck, down the yellow flood. Inside, the horses, more dead than alive, panted with thirst, and yet were still too timid to approach the water troughs. They slipped and struggled on the deck, fell and plunged up again, and at each fall or plunge, the blows fell on their backs, partly from folly, partly from the satisfaction that some men feel in hurting anything which fate or Providence has placed without the power of resistance in their hands. Instinct and reason; the hypothetic difference which good weak men use as an anæsthetic when their conscience pricks them for their sins of omission and commission to their four-footed brethren. But a distinction wholly without a difference, and a link in the long chain of fraud and force with which we bind all living things, men, animals, and most of all our reasoning selves, in one crass neutral-tinted slavery. Who that has never put his bistouri upon the soul, and hitherto no vivisectionist (of men or animals) can claim the feat, shall say who suffers most—the biped or the four-footed animal? I know the cant of education,

the higher organism, and the dogmatics of the so-called scientists which bid so fair to worthily replace those of the theologians, but who shall say if animals, when suddenly removed from all that sanctifies their lives, do not pass agonies far more intense than such endured by those whose education or whose reason—what you will—still leaves them hope?

By the next morning the wheezy, wood-fired steamer was in the roads of Buenos Ayres, the exiles of the Ibicuy with coats all starring, flanks tucked up, hanging their heads, no more the light-some creatures of but yesterday.

Steam launches, pitching like porpoises in the shallow stream, whale-boats manned by Italians girt with red sashes, and with yellow shirts made beautiful with scarlet horse-shoes, and whose eyes glistened like diamonds in their roguish, nut-coloured faces, came alongside the ship. Lighters, after much expenditure of curses and vain reaches with boat-hooks at the paddle-floats, hooked on, and dropped astern. The donkey-engine started with a whirr, giving the unwilling passengers another tremor of alarm, and then the work of lowering them into the flat-bottomed lighters straight began. Kickings and strugglings, and one by one, their coats all matted with the sweat of terror, they were dropped into the boat. One or two slipped from the slings, and landed with a broken leg, and then a dig with a "facon" ended their troubles, and their bodies floated on the shallow waves, followed by flocks of gulls. Puffing and pitching,

the tug dragging the lighter reached the ocean-steamer's side. Again the donkey-engine rattled and whirred, and once again the luckless animals were hoisted up, stowed on the lower deck in rows in semi-darkness, and after a due interval the vessel put to sea.

"Who would not sell a farm and go to sea?" the sailor says, and turns his quid remarking, "Go to sea for pleasure, yes, and to hell for fun." The smell of steam, confinement, the motion of the ship, monotony of days, time marked but by the dinner-bell, a hell to passengers who in their cabins curse the hours, and kill the time with cards, books, drink and flirtation, and yet find every day a week. But to the exiles of the Ibicuy, stricken with terror, too ill to eat, parching, and yet afraid to drink, hopeless and fevered, sick at heart, slipping and falling, bruised with each motion of the ship, beaten when restless, and perhaps in some dim way conscious of having left their birthplace, and foreseeing nothing but misery, who shall say what they endured during the passage, in the hot days, the stifling nights, and in the final change to the dark skies and chilling breezes of the north? Happiest those who died without the knowledge of the London streets, and whose bruised carcasses were flung into the sea, their coats matted with sweat and filth, legs swelled, and heads hanging down limply as they trailed the bodies on the decks.

The docks, the dealer's yard, the breaking in to harness, and the sale at Aldridge's, and one by one

they were led out to meet no more; as theologians who have blessed man with hell, allow no paradise to beasts. Perhaps because their lives being innocent, they would have filled it up so that no man could enter, for what saint in any calendar could for an instant claim to be admitted if his life were compared to that of the most humble of his four-footed brethren in the Lord? Docked duly, to show that nature does not know how to make a horse, bitted and broken, the chestnut colt, once Cruz Cabrera's pride, started on cab work, and for a time gave satisfaction to his owner, for, though not fast, he was untiring, and, as his driver said, "yer couldn't kill 'im, 'e was a perfect glutton for 'ard work."

Streets, streets, and yet more streets, endless and sewer-like, stony and wood-paved, suburbs interminable, and joyless squares, gaunt stuccoed crescents, "vales," "groves," "places," a perfect wilderness of bricks, he trotted through them all. Derbies and boat-races, football matches, Hurlingham and the Welsh Harp, Plaistow and Finchley, Harrow-on-the-Hill, the wait at theatres, the nightly crawl up Piccadilly watching for fares, where men and women stop to talk; rain, snow, ice, frost, and the fury of the spring east wind, he knew them all, struggled and shivered, baked, shook with fatigue, and still resisted. But time, that comes upon us and our horses, stealthily creeping like Indians creep upon the war trail without a sign, loosening the sinews of our knees, thickening their wind, and making both of us useless except for worms, began

to tell. The chronic cough, the groggy feet, the eye covered with a cloud, caused by a flick inside the blinkers, and the staring coat, soon turned the chestnut, from a cab with indiarubber tyres, celluloid fittings, and a looking-glass upon each side (for fools to see how impossible it is that they can ever have been made after God's image), to a night hack, and then the fall to a fish-hawker's cart was not too long delayed.

Blows and short commons, sores from the collar, and continued overwork, slipping upon the greasy streets, struggling with loads impossible to move, finished the tragedy; and of the joyous colt who but a year or two ago bounded through thickets scarcely brushing off the dew, nothing was left but a gaunt, miserable, lame, wretched beast, a very bag of bones, too thin for dog's meat, and too valueless even to afford the mercy of the knacker's fee. So, struggling on upon his Via Crucis, Providence at last remembered, and let him fall, and the shaft entering his side, his blood coloured the pavement; his owner, after beating him till he was tired, gave him a farewell kick or two; then he lay still, his eyes open and staring, and white foam exuding from his mouth.

The scent of horse dung filled the fetid air, cabs rattled, and vans jolted on the stones, and the dead horse, bloody and mud-stained, formed, as it were, a sort of island, parting the traffic into separate streams, as it surged onward roaring in the current of the streets.

A PAKEHA

A PAKEHA

RAIN, rain, and more rain, dripping off the sodden trees, soaking the fields, and blotting out the landscape as with a neutral-tinted gauze. The sort of day that we in the land "dove il doce Dorico risuona" designate as "saft." Enter along the road to me a neighbour of some fifty to sixty years of age, one Mr. Campbell, a little bent, hair faded rather than grey, frosty-faced as we Scotsmen are apt to turn after some half a century of weather, but still a glint of red showing in the cheeks; moustache and whiskers trimmed in the fashion of the later sixties; "tacketed" boots, and clothes, if not impervious to the rain, as little affected by it as is the bark of trees. His hat, once black and of the pattern affected at one time by all Free Church clergymen, now greenish and coal-scuttled fore and aft and at the sides. In his red, chapped, dirty, but grey-mittened hands a shepherd's stick—long, crooked, and made of hazel-wood.

"It'll maybe tak' up, laird."

"Perhaps."

"An awfu' spell o' it."

"Yes, disgusting."

"Aye, laird, the climate's sort o' seekenin'. I mind when I was in New Zealand in the sixties, aye, wi' a surveyor, just at the triangulation, ye ken. Man, a grand life, same as the tinklers, here to-day and gane to-morrow, like old Heather Jock. Hoot, never mind your dog, laird, there's just McClimant's sheep, puir silly body, I ken his keel-mark. Losh me, a bonny country, just a pairfect pairadise, New Zealand. When I first mind Dunedin it wasna bigger than the clachan there, out by. A braw place noo, I understan', and a' the folk fearfu' took up wi' horse, driving their four-in-hands, blood cattle, every one of them. There's men to-day like Jacky Price—he was a Welshmen, I'm thinking—who I mind doing their day's darg just like mysel' aboot Dunedin, and noo they send their sons hame to be educated up aboot England.

"When? 'Oo aye, I went oot in the old *London* wi' Captin Macpherson. He'd bin the round trip a matter o' fifteen times, forbye a wee bit jaunt whiles after the 'blackbirds' (slaves, ye ken, what we called free endentured labourers) to the New Hebrides. The *London*, aye, 'oo aye, she foundered in the Bay (Biscay, ye ken) on her return. It's just a special providence I wasna a passenger myself.

"Why did I leave the country? Eh, laird, ye may say. I would hae made my hame out there, but it was just the old folks threap, threaping on me to come back, I'm telling ye. A bonny toon,

Dunedin, biggit on a wee hill just for a' the wurrld like Gartfarran there, and round the point a wee bit plain just like the Carse o' Stirling. Four year I wrocht at the surveyin', maistly triangulation, syne twa at shepherdin', nane o' your Australlian fashion tailing them a' day, but on the hame system gaen' aboot; man, I mind whiles I didna see anither man in sax weeks' time."

"Then you burned bricks, you say?"

"Aye, I didna' think ye had been so gleg at the Old Book. Aye, aye, laird, plenty of stra', or maybe it was yon New Zealand flax stalk. The awfiest plant ye ever clapt your eyes on, is yon flax. I mind when I first landed aff the old *London*—she foundered in the Bay. It was just a speecial interposition . . . but I mind I telt ye. Well, I just was dandering aboot outside the toon, and hettled to pu' some of yon flax; man, I wasna fit; each leaf is calculated to bear a pressure of aboot a ton. The natives, the Maories, use it to thack their cottages. A bonny place, New Zealand, a pairfect pairadise—six-and-thirty years ago—aye, aye, 'oo aye, just the finest country in God's airth.

"Het? Na, na, nane so het as here in simmer, a fine, dry air, and a bonny bright blue sky. Dam't, I mind the diggings opening tae. There were a wheen captins. Na, na, not sea captins, airmy captins, though there were plenty of the sea yins doon in the sooth; just airmy captins who had gone out and ta'en up land; blocked it, ye ken, far

as frae here to Stirlin'. Pay for it, aye, aboot a croon the acre, and a wee bit conseederation to the Government surveyor just kept things square. Weel, when the diggins opened, some of them sold out and made a fortune. Awfu' place thae diggins, I hae paid four shillin' a pound for salt mysel', and as for speerits, they were just fair contraband.

"And the weemen. Aye, I mind the time, but ye'll hae seen the Circassian weemen aboot Africa. Weel, weel, I'm no saying it's not the case, but folk allow that yon Circassians are the finest weemen upon earth. Whiles I hae seen some tae, at fairs, ye ken, in the bit boothies, but to my mind there's naething like the Maories, especially the half-casted yins, clean-limbed, nigh on six feet high the maist o' them. Ye'll no ken Geordie Telfer, him that was a sojer, he's got a bit place o' his ain out by Milngavie. Geordie's aye bragging, bostin' aboot weemen that he's seen in foreign pairts. He just is of opeenion that in Cashmere or thereaboots there is the finest weemen in the warld. Black, na, na, laird, just a wee toned and awfu' tall, ye ken. Geordie he says that Alexander the Great was up aboot Cashmere and that his sojers, Spartans I think they ca'ed them, just intromitted wi' the native weemen, took them, perhaps, for concubines, as the Scriptures say; but ye'll ken sojers, laird; Solomon, tae, an awfu' chiel yon Solomon. The Maori men were na blate either, a' ower sax fut high, some nigh on seven fut, sure as death, I'm tellin' ye. Bonny

wrestlers, tae; man, Donald Dinnie got an unco tirl wi' ane o' them aboot Dunedin, leastwise if it wasna Dinnie, it was Donald Grant or Donald McKenzie, or ane of they champions frae Easter Ross. Sweir to sell their land tae they chaps, I mind the Government sent out old Sir George Grey, a wise-like man, Sir George, ane o' they filantrofists. Weel, he just talkit to them, ca'ed them his children, and said that they shouldna resist legeetimate authority. Man, a wee wiry fella', he was the licht-weight champion wrestler at Tiki-Tiki, just up and said, 'Aye, aye, Sir George,' though he wasna gi'en him Sir George, but just some native name they had for him, 'we're a' your children, but no sic children as to gie our land for naething.' Sir George turnit the colour of a neep, ane o' yon swedes, ye ken, and said nae mair."

"How did they manage it?"

"The Government just arranged matters wi' the chiefs. Bribery, weel a' weel, I'll no gae sae far as to impute ony corruption on them, but a Government, a Government, ye ken, is very apt to hae its way.

"Dam't, 'twas a fine country, a pairfect pairadise. I mind aince going oot with Captin Brigstock, Hell-fire Jock they ca'ed him, after they bush-rangers. There was ane Morgan frae Australlia bail't up a wheen folks, and dam't, says Captin Brigstock, ye'll hae to come, Campbell. Shot him, yes, authority must be respected, and the majesty o' law properly vendeecated, or else things dinna

thrive. It was in a wood of gora-gora we came on him about the mouth of day. Morgan, ye ken, was boiling a billy in a sort o' wee clearin', his horse tied to a tree close by, when Brigstock and the others came upon him. Brigstock just shouted in the name o' the law and then let fly. Morgan, he fell across the fire, and when we all came up says he, 'Hell-fire, ye didna gie me ony chance,' and the blood spouted from his mouth into the boiling pan.

"Deid, 'oo aye, deid as Rob Roy. I dinna care to mind it. But a fine life, laird, nae slavin' at the plough, but every ane goin' aboot on horseback; and the bonny wee bit wooden huts, the folk no fashed wi' furniture, but sittin' doon to tak' their tea upon the floor wi' their backs against the wall. That's why they ca'ed them squatters. They talk aboot Australlia and America, but if it hadna been for the old folks I would hae made my hame aboot a place ca'ed Paratanga, and hae taken up with ane o' they Maori girls, or maybe a half-caste. Married, weel, I widna say I hae gane to such a length. Dam't, a braw country, laird, a pairfect pairadise, I'm telling ye;" and then the rain grew thicker, and seemed to come between us as he plodded on towards the "toon."

VICTORY

VICTORY

RANKS upon ranks of rastaquoères, Brazilians, Roumanians, Russians, Bulgarians, with battalions of Americans, all seated round the "piazza" of the Grand Hotel. Ladies from Boston, Chicago, and New York, their heels too high, their petticoats too much belaced, their Empire combs bediamonded so as to look almost like cut-glass chandeliers, as in their chairs they sat and read the latest news from Tampa, Santiago, and how Cervera's Squadron met the fate which they (the ladies) reckoned God prepares for those who dare to fight against superior odds.

Outside upon the boulevards, cocottes, guides, cabmen, and androgynous young men, touts, and all those who hang about that caravansary where the dulcet Suffolk whine, made sharper by the air of Massachusetts, sounds, passed and repassed.

Smug-faced, black-coated citizens from Buffalo and Albany, and from places like Detroit and Council Bluffs, to which the breath of fashion has not penetrated, scanned the *New York Herald*, read the glorious news, and, taking off their hats, deigned publicly to recognize the existence of a God, and after standing reverently silent, masti-

cating their green cigars in contemplation of His wondrous ways, to take a drink.

Aquatic plants and ferns known only to hotels, and constituting a sub-family of plants, which by the survival of the ugliest have come at last to stand gas, dust, saliva, and an air befogged with Chypre, grew in the fountain where, in the tepid water, gold fish with swollen eyes, and blotched with patches of unhealthy white, swam to and fro, picking up crumbs and rising to the surface when some one threw a smoked-out cigarette into the basin, in the midst of which a fig-leaved Naiad held a stucco shell.

The corridors were blocked with Saratoga trunks; perspiring porters staggered to and fro, bending beneath the weight of burdens compared to which a sailor's chest is as a pill-box.

All went well; the tapes clicked off their international lies, detailing all the last quotations of the deep mines upon the Rand, the fall in Spanish Fours; in fact, brought home to those with eyes to see, the way in which the Stock Exchange had put a rascals' ring around the globe.

Waiters ran to and fro, their ears attuned to every outrage upon French, seeking to find the meaning of the jargons in which they were addressed.

Majestic butlers in black knee-breeches, and girt about the neck with great brass chains, moved slowly up and down, so grave and so respectable that had you laid your hands upon any one of them

and made a bishop of him he would have graced the post.

Mysterious, well-dressed men sat down beside you, and after a few words proposed to take you in the evening to show you something new.

Women walked to and fro, glaring at one another as they had all been tigresses, or again, catching each other's eyes, reddened, and looked ashamed, as if aware, though strangers, that they understood the workings of the other's heart.

Burano chandeliers and modern tapestry, with red brocade on the two well-upholstered chairs, imparted beauty and a look of wealth, making one feel as if by striking an electric bell a door would open and a troop of half-dressed women file into the court, after the fashion of another kind of inn.

Outside the courtyard Paris roared, chattered, and yelped, cycles and automobiles made the poor *piéton's* life a misery, and set one thinking how inferior after all the Mind which thought out Eden was to our own.

Upon the asphalt the horizontales lounged along, pushing against the likely-looking passer-by like cats against a chair.

Cabs rattled, and the whole *clinquant* town wore its best air of unreality, which it puts off alone upon the morning of a revolution.

Through boulevards, parvis, cités, along the quays, in the vast open spaces which, like Saharas of grey stone, make the town desolate, in cafés, brothels, theatres, in church and studio, and

wherever men most congregate, groups stood about reading the news, gesticulating, weeping, perspiring, and agog with a half-impotent enthusiastic orgasm of wildest admiration for Spain, Cervera, and the men who without bunkum or illusion steamed to certain death. And, curiously enough, the execration fell not so much upon Chicago as on "ces cochons d'Anglais," who by their base connivance had wrought the ruin of the Spanish cause.

Yankees themselves read and remarked with sneers that England's turn was coming next, and after "Kewby," that they reckoned to drag the British flag through every dunghill in New York; then one winked furtively and said, "We need them now, but afterwards we'll show Victoria in a cage for a picayune a peep, and teach the Britishers what to do with their old Union Jack," thinking no doubt of the ten-cent paper which is sold in every city of the States, stamped with the Spanish flag.

And as I sat, musing on things and others—thinking, for instance, that when you scratch a man and see his blood you know his nature by the way he bears his wound, and that the Spaniards, wounded to the death, were dying game (after the fashion of the English in times gone by, before Imperialism, before the Nonconformist snuffle, the sweating system, and the rest had changed our nature), and that the Yankees at the first touch cried out like curs, though they had money, numbers, and everything upon their side—I fell a-thinking on the Spain of old. Iñigo Lopez de

Mendoza, el Gran Capitan, Cortes (not at the siege of Mexico, but in the rout before Algiers) came up before me, and I thought on the long warfare, extending over seven hundred years, by which Spain saved the southern half of Europe from the Moors; upon Gerona, Zaragoza, and, most of all, upon Cervera, last of the Quixotes, Vara de Rey, Linares, and the poor peasants from Galician hills, thyme-scented wastes in Lower Aragon, Asturian mountains, and Estremenian oak-woods, who, battling against superior numbers, short of food, of ammunition, and bereft of hope, were proving their descent from the grim soldiers of the Spanish "Tercios" of the Middle Ages, and making the invaders of their country pay for their piracy in blood.

Blood is the conqueror's coin the whole world over, and if the island which Columbus found for Spain pass into other hands, let those who take it pour out their blood like water to inaugurate their reign of peace.

Where the connection between the senses and the brain comes in, which influences first, and how, or whether a wise Providence, always upon His guard (after the fashion of an operator in a Punch and Judy show), influences each man directly, as by celestial thought suggestion, I cannot tell.

All that I know is, that once walking on the rampart gardens which in Cadiz overhang the sea and form the outside rim of the "Taza de Plata," as the Spaniards call the town, I on a sudden saw

the River Plate. The Gauchos, plains, wild horses, the stony wastes, the ostriches (the "Alegria del Desierto"), came up before me, and in especial a certain pass over a little river called the Gualiyan; the sandy dip, the metallic-looking trees, the greenish river with the flamingoes and white herons and the black-headed swans; the vultures sitting motionless on the dead trees, and most of all the penetrating scent of the mimosa, known to the natives as the "espinillo de olor."

Turning and wondering why, I saw a stunted tree with yellow blossoms duly ticketed with its description "Mimosa" this or that, and with its "habitat" the warmer district of the River Plate.

I leave these things to wise philosophers and to those men of science who seem to think mankind is worth the martyrdom of living dogs and cats; or who, maybe, drag out the entrails of their quivering fellow-mortals merely to stimulate their senses or erotic powers.

But the "dwawm" over, looking about, fenced in by swarms of overjoyed Americans, all talking shrilly, reading out the news, exultant at the triumph of their fleet, puffed up and arrogant as only the descendants of the Puritans can be, I saw a Spaniard sitting with his daughter, a girl about nineteen.

Himself a Castellano rancio, silent and grave, dressed all in black, moustache waxed to a point, square little feet like boxes, brown little hands, face like mahogany, hair cropped close, and with the

unillusional fatalistic air of worldly wisdom mixed with simplicity which characterizes Spaniards of the older school.

Being a Christian, he spoke no tongue but that which Christians use, was proud of it, proud of his ignorance, proud (I have no doubt) of his descent.

No doubt he saw everything through the clear dazzling atmosphere of old Castille, which Spaniards of his kind seem to condense and carry off with them for use in other climes.

Seeing so clearly, he saw nothing clear, for the intelligence of man is so contrived as to be ineffective if a mist of some sort is not interposed.

The daughter fair, fair with the fairness of a Southern, blue-eyed, and skin like biscuit china, hands and feet fine, head well set on, and yet with the decided gestures and incisive speech, the "aire recio," and the "meneo" of the hips in walking, of the women of her race.

They sat some time before a pile of newspapers, the father smoking gravely, taking down the smoke as he were drinking it, and then in a few minutes breathing it out to serve as an embellishment to what he said, holding his cigarette meanwhile fixed in a little silver instrument contrived like two clasped hands.

The Spanish newspapers were, of course, all without news, or said they had none, and as the daughter read, the old man punctuated with "Valiente," "Pobrecitas," and the like, when he heard how before El Caney, Vara de Rey had

died, or how the Americans had shot the three Sisters of the Poor whose bodies were found lying with lint and medicine in their hands.

"Read me the papers of the Americans, hija de mi corazon," and she began, translating as she read.

Reading of the whole agony, choking but self-possessed, she read: the *Vizcaya*, *Almirante Oquendo*, and the rest; the death of Villamil, he who at least redeemed the promise made to the Mother of his God in Cadiz before he put to sea.

And as she read the old man gave no sign, sitting impassive as a fakir, or like an Indian warrior at the stake.

She went on reading; the fleet steamed through the hell of shot and shell, took fire, was beached, blew up, and still he gave no sign.

Cervera steps on board the conqueror's ship, weeping, gives up his sword, and the old man sat still.

When all was finished, and the last vessel burning on the rocks, slowly the tears fell down his old brown cheeks, and he broke silence. "Virgen de Guadalupe, has not one escaped?" and the girl, looking at him through her now misty eyes, "No, papa, God has so willed it. . . . What is wrong with your moustache?"

Then, with an effort, he took down his grief, said quietly, "I must change my hairdresser," got up, and offering his daughter his arm, walked out impassible, through the thick ranks of the defeated foe.

ROTHENBERGER'S WEDDING

ROTHENBERGER'S WEDDING

SHORT and broad-shouldered, with the flaxen hair and porcelain-coloured eyes of the true man of Kiel or Koenigsberg, Dr. Karl Rothenberger prided himself on being a townsman of the Great Kant, "who make the critique of pure sense." For him in vain the modern mystic spread his nets; his mass, his psychological research, his ethics based on the saving of his own gelatinous soul, said nothing to the man of Koenigsberg. His work to minister by electricity to the rheumatic, the gouty; to those who had loved perhaps well, but certainly in a vicarious and post-prandial fashion; his passion fishing with a float; a "goode felawe," not too refined, but yet well educated; his literary taste bounded by idealistic novels about materialistic folk, and the drum-taps of the bards of Anglo-Saxon militarism; the doctor looked on the world as a vast operating theatre, sparing not even his own foibles in his diagnosis of mankind. All sentiment he held if not accursed, yet as superfluous, and though he did not pride himself exactly on his opinions, knowing them well to be but the result of education, and of a few molecules of iron, more or less, in the

composition of his blood, yet would deliver them to all and sundry, as he were lecturing to students in a university. Women he held inferior to men, as really do almost all men, although they fear to say so; but again, he said, "de womens they have occupy my mind since I was eighteen years."

So after many wanderings in divers lands, he came, as wise men will, to London, and set up his household gods in a vast plane-tree-planted square (with cat ground in the middle called a garden), and of which the residents each had a key, but never walked in, sat in, or used in any way, though all of them would have gone to the stake rather than see a member of the public enter into its sacred precincts, or a stray child play in it, unless attended by a nurse.

Honours and fees fell thick on Rothenberger, and he became greatly belettered, member of many a learned, dull society. He duly purchased a degree; and squares and crescents quite a mile away sent out their patients, and were filled with the sonorous glory of his name. One thing was wanting, and that one thing troubled him not a little; but he yet saw it was inevitable if he would rise to Harley Street or Saville Row, and the sleek pair of horses which (without bearing-reins) testify to a doctor's status in the scientific world. A wife, or as he said, a "real legitimate," to prove to all his patients that he was a moral man. Strange that the domestic arrangements of a public man should

militate for or against him; but so it is, at least in England, where even if a man cheat and spread ruin to thousands, yet he may find apologists, chiefly, of course, amongst that portion of the public who have not suffered by his delinquencies, so that his life be what is known as pure. Morals and purity in our group of islands seem to condone drunkenness, lies, and even theft (so that the sum stolen be large enough), and to have crystallized themselves into a censorship of precisely the very thing as to which no man or woman has the right to call another to account.

So Rothenberger, looking about for a vessel by means of which to purify himself (and push his business), lit on a girl with money, living, as he said, "oot by Hampstead way;" went through the process known as courting, in a mixture of German and of English, eked out with Plaat-Deutsch, and finally induced the lady to fix the day on which to make him pure. Science and business jointly having so taken up his time that he had learnt but little English, he was at some loss, and left arrangements to the family of his intended wife.

Not knowing English customs, he had written asking in what costume he should appear on the great day, and received a letter telling him to make his appearance at the church duly dressed in a tall hat, light trousers, and a new frock coat. Frock coat he read as "frac," and ordered wedding garments such as he thought suitable, with the

addition of a brand-new evening coat. The wedding breakfast having been ordered at the Hôtel Metropole, he there transferred himself, proposing to pass the night before his final entry into moral life quietly and decently, as befits one about to change his state. But as he said, "God or some other thing was of another mind, for when I was arriving at the place, mein head feel heavy, and I was out of sorts, and when I ring the bell, a housemaid answer it wit a hot-water jug, and came into the room. Himmel, what for a girl, black hair like horse's tail, great glear plue eyes, and tall and fat, it was a miracle. I fall in love wit her almost at once, but I say nothings, only wink little at her with my eye. All the night long I could not schleep, thinking part of the housemaid, part of mein wife, and part if perhaps I was not going to do a very silly ding. When it was morning I have quite forgot the church, but still remember what the clergyman was like. So I go to the porter (he was a landsman of my own), and ask him to get me a cab, and then explain, I was to be married oot by Hampstead way, that morning at eleven and half o'clock. The porter say what church shall I tell the schelm to drive to, but mein Got I have forgot. So I say, go to Hampstead, and I will go to all the churches and ask if a German is to be married, till I find the right one out. The cabman think that I was mad, and I get into the cab dressed in clear trousers, white waistcoat, and plue necktie, mit little spot;

shiny new boots that hurt me very much; with yellow gloves three-quarter-eight in size, and with my new "frac" coat, so that I think myself, eh, Rothenberger, was that really you? The cabman wink mit de porter, and we start away. We drive and drive, first to one church and then another, and I always ask, is it in this church that a German is to be marry at half twelve o'clock? Dey grin at me, and every one say no. De dime approach, and I was sweating in the cab, not knowing what they say if at half twelve o'clock I not turn up to time. At last looking out from the window I see the clergyman walking along the street mit a big hymn-book in his hand. I cry to him, Ach Himmel, it is I, Karl Rothenberger, that you must marry at half twelve o'clock. He stop, and shomp into the cab, and then we drive to church.

All was so glad to see me, for I hear one say, I thought the German must have change his mind. I ran into the church, and my wife say, What for a costume is it that you have? Frock coat and clear grey pants, dat is not wedding dress; so I say I know dat, but why you write to me, mind and buy a new "frac coat"?

They mumble out their stuff, and when the clergyman ask me if I want this woman for mein wife, I say, all right, and all the people laugh like everythings. Then when he say, I, Karl, do promise and etcetera, I say, dat is so, and de people laugh again. At last it all was done, and we drive off to

the hotel to have the breakfast, and mein wife look beautiful in her new travelling dress. At the hotel the company was met, and I go up to mein apartment to change the dam frac coat, to wash mein hands, and put a little brillantine on my moustache, whilst mein wife mit the bridesmaids go to another room, and all the company was waiting down below.

I want hot water, so I rang the bell, and the stout pretta chambermaid she bring it in a jug. How the thing pass I never knew till now, but I wink at her, and she laugh, and then—she put down the jug, just for a moment,—for the company, mein wife, her father, and the bridesmaids, all was waiting down below. So I come down and make mein speech, talk to the bridesmaids, and we eat like anythings, and then we drive away to pass our honeymoon, and somehow I feel mein head much lighter than before. Marriage is good for man, it sober him, it bring him business, and it bring him children, and . . . I am happy mit my wife . . . The housemaid, oh yes, ach Got, I hear that some one take from the place to live mit him, and it is not a wonder, for she was so tall, so stout, have such black hair, and such great eyes, it was a pity that she spend her life answering the bell, and bringing up hot water in a jug.

LA CLEMENZA DE TITO

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THE hotel paper had a somewhat misguiding "Comfort" as its telegraphic address. Upon the walls were reproductions of sporting prints by Leech, depicting scions of the British aristocracy taking their pleasures not so very sadly after all, and easily demonstrating their superiority to several smock-frocked rustics by galloping close past them, and shouting "Tally-ho," holding their left ear between their thumb and finger to emphasize the note. Apollinaris and whisky splits, Fritz Rupprecht's "Special," with other advertisements of a like nature, filled up the blanks between the oleographs. *Iron* and *Commerce*, with the *Cook's Excursionist* and *Engineering*, lay untouched upon the tables, serving to show that if some books be not real books at all, there are newspapers which are, as it were, but dummies, holding no police news, football specials, murders, assaults on women, divorce cases, and other items which the educated public naturally expects within their sheets. Slipshod and futile, but attentive German waiters, went about bringing hot whisky, whisky and soda, whisky and lemonade, and whisky neat

to the belated customers. Upon the tables glasses had made great rings, commercial travellers had left their pigskin satchels in a heap, and, by the fire, a group of travellers sat silently drinking after the Scottish fashion, and spitting in the grate. Twelve o'clock, half-past twelve, then one by one they dropped away murmuring good-night, and setting down their glasses with an air of having worked manfully for a good night's repose.

Still I sat on gazing into the fire, and almost unaware that on the other side sat a companion of my vigil, till at last he said, "Do you know Yambo, sir?" and to my vague assent rejoined, "Yambo on the Arabian coast, just opposite Hodeida, where vessels in the pilgrim trade discharge their 'niggers.' It's the port for Mecca, that is, the 'Sambaks' used to put in there, but now we do the traffic right from Mogador." I looked with interest at the man, liking his Demosthenic style of opening remarks. Tall and broad-shouldered, dressed in navy blue, boots like small packing-cases, and a green necktie in which was stuck a cairngorm pin; he wore a silver watch-chain with a small steering-wheel attached to it; not quite a sailor, yet a look of the sea about his clothes; he had a face open and innocent, yet wrinkled round the eyes like a young elephant, and struck me as being, perhaps not foolish, certainly not wise, but with a tinge of worldly wisdom gathered in seaport towns, at music-halls, and other places where those who go down

to the sea in ships gain their experience of life. "Yambo," I said; "I thought that Jeddah was the port the pilgrims landed at." "Well, so it is," he said, "but I was thinking about Yambo, been there a many times, used to run arms for the tribes to fight the Turks, when I was fourth engineer in the old *Pyramus*. Yes, yes, I've been at sea most all my life, though my old dad keeps a slap-up hotel at Weston-super-Māre. No need to go to sea, no, but you know some folks would go to hell for pleasure, and I suppose I'm one. Dad, you know—now were you ever at Weston-super-Māre? —is fond of literature, does a bit himself, Chambers you know; mostly upon the conchology and the fossils of the South Devon coast; awfully fond of it, and so am I, nothing I like better than, after getting out of the engine-room, to lie on deck and read one of Bulwer's books or Dickens's, both of them stunning. No, I never write myself. Can't make out what set me thinking about Yambo. What! you won't? Well, waiter, waiter, Garçong, as we used to say at Suez, another whisky, slippy, you know. I've always been a temperate man, but like a nightcap before turning in. Perim ain't so far off from Yambo; ah yes, now I remember what it was I had to say. You know them Galla girls? prime, ain't they? But Perim, I remember being Shanghaed there, nothing to do, a beastly hole; sand, beastly, gets in your socks, gets in your hair, makes you feel dirty, no matter how you wash.

Well, you know, there were about two hundred of us there, some kind of Government work was going on, and I was left there out of my ship, kind of loaned off, you see, to help the Johnnies at the condensing works. I've been at Suez, Yambo as I told you, Rangoon, down at Talcahuano on the Chilian coast, wrecked in Smythe's Channel, and been about a bit, but Perim fairly takes the cake, not even a sheet of blotting-paper between it and hell. As I was saying, then, we were cooped up, and not a woman in the place; even the Government saw it at last, thought maybe worse would happen if they did nothing, and sent and got six of them Galla girls. Leastwise, if they didn't send for them, they let a Levantine, Mirandy was his name, introduce them on the strict Q.T. Well, you know, the thing was like this, sir—you know them Galla girls, black as a boot and skins always as cool as ice, even in a khamsin; some people says they are better than white girls; but not in mine; but anyhow they've got no 'Bookay d'Afreek' about them, it always turns me sick. As I was saying, I thought I'd have a 'pasear' one evening, so I lemonaded up to the 'Mansion,' and began talking to one of them girls, sort of to pass the time. Serpent upon the rocks, eh? well, that old Solomon knew something about girls. Now here comes in the curious thing, it always strikes me just as if I'd read it in a book; Dickens now or Thackeray could have 'andled it, Bulwer would 'ave made it a little

loosious. Just as the gal was taking off her things —oh, no offence, captain, I'm telling you the thing just as it happened—I saw she had a crucifix a-hanging round her neck. Papist? Oh no, not much; father, he sat under Rev. Hiles Hitchens, light of the Congregationalists. No, no, nothing to do with Rome, never could bear the influence of the confessor in a family. A little free myself, especially below latitude forty, but at 'ome and in the family I like things ship-shape. Well, as I said, round her black neck she had a silver crucifix, contrast of colour made the thing stand out double the size. Ses I, 'What's that?' and she says, 'Klistian girl, Johnny, me Klistian all the same you.' That was a stopper over all, and I just reached for my hat, says, 'Klistian are yer,' and I gave her two of them Spanish dollars and a kiss, and quit the place. What did she say? Why, nothing, looked at me and laughed, and says, 'You Klistian, Johnny, plenty much damn fool.' No, I don't know what she meant, I done my duty, and that's all I am concerned about.

"Another half, just a split whisky and Apollinaris. Well, if you won't, good-night;" and the door slammed, leaving me gazing at the fast-blackening fire.

SOHAIL

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SOHAIL is the Arabic name of the star Canopus, to which a curious belief belongs. It appears that in some fashion, known alone to Allah, the fate of the Arab race is bound up with the star. Where it sheds its light their empire flourishes, and there alone. Wherefore or why the thing is so, no true believer seems to know, but that it is so he is well aware, and that suffices him.

Questionings and doubts, changes of costume and religion, striving for ideals, improvements, telegraphs and telephones, are well enough for Christians, whose lives are passed in hurry and in hunting after gold. For those who have changed but little for the last two thousand years, in dress, in faith and customs, it is enough to know it is a talismanic star. Let star-gazers and those who deal in books, dub the star Alpha (or Beta) Argo, it is all one to Arabs. If you question knowledge, say the Easterns, it falls from its estate. If this is so the empiric method has much to answer for. Knowledge and virtue and a horse's mouth should not pass through too many hands. Knowledge is absolute, and even argument but dulls it, and strips

it of its authenticity, as the bloom of a ripe peach is lost, almost by looking on it.

Of one thing there can be no doubt. When in the Yemen, ages before the first historian penned the fable known as history, the Arabs, watching their flocks, observed Sohail, it seems to have struck them as a star differing from all the rest.

Al-Makkari writes of it on several occasions. The Dervish Abderahman Sufi of Rai, in his *Introduction to the Starry Heavens*, remarks that, at the feet of Sohail is seen, in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, a "curious white spot." The "curious white spot" astronomers have thought to be the greater of the two Magellan clouds. Perhaps it is so, but I doubt if the Arabs, as a race, were concerned about the matter, so that they saw the star.

From wandering warring tribes Mohammed made a nation of them. Mohammed died and joined the wife in paradise, of whom he said, "By Allah, she shall sit at my right hand, because when all men laughed she clave to me." Then came Othman, Ali, and the rest, and led them into other lands, to Irak, Damascus, El Hind, to Ifrikia, lastly to Spain, and still their empire waxed, even across the "black waters" of the seas, and still Sohail was there to shine upon them. In the great adventure, one of the few in which a people has engaged; when first Tarik landed his Berbers on the rock which bears his name; at the battle on

the Guadalete where the king, Don Roderick, disappeared from the eyes of men, leaving his golden sandals by a stream; to Seville, Cordoba, and Murcia, the land of Teodmir ben Gobdos, to which the Arabs gave the name of Masr, right up to Zaragoza, Sohail accompanied the host. A curious host it must have been with Muza riding on a mule, and with but two-and-twenty camels to carry all its baggage. From Jativa to Huesca of the Bell, where King Ramiro, at the instigation of Abbot Frotardo (a learned man), cut off his nobles' heads as they were poppies in a field, they followed it across the Pyrenees, halting at the spot where from his "Camp in Aquitaine" Muza dispatched a messenger to Rome to tell the Pope that he was coming to take him by the beard if he refused Islam. Then the wise men (who always march with armies), looking aloft at night, declared the star was lost. Although they smote the Christian dogs, taking their lands, their daughters, horses, and their gold, on several occasions as Allah willed it, yet victory was not so stable as in Spain. Perhaps beyond the mountains their spirits fell from lack of sun, or their horses sickened in the fat plains of France.

Then the conquering tide had spent itself and flowed back into Spain; at Zaragoza the first Moorish kingdom rose. Al-Makkari writes that at that time Sohail was visible in Upper Aragon, but low on the horizon. Again the Christians

conquered, and the royal race of Aben Hud fled from the city. Ibn Jaldun relates that, shortly afterwards, Sohail became invisible from Aragon. The Cid, Rodrigo Diaz, he of Vivar (may God remember him), prevailed against Valencia, and from thence the star, indignant, took its departure. And so of Jativa, Beni Carlo, and Alpuixech.

Little by little Elche, with its palm-woods, and even Murcia bade it good-bye, as one by one, in the centuries of strife, the Christians in succession conquered each one of them. At last the belief gained ground that, only at one place in Spain, called from the circumstance Sohail, could the star be seen. At Fuengirola, between Malaga and Marbella, still stands the little town the Arabs called Sohail, lost amongst sand-hills, looking across at Africa, of which it seems to form a part; cactus and olive, cane-brake and date palms, its chiefest vegetation; in summer, hot as Bagdad, in winter, sheltered from the winds which come from Christendom by the Sierras of the Alpujarra and Segura. Surely there the star would stop, and let the Arab power flourish under its influence, and there for centuries it did stand stationary. The City of the Pomegranate was founded, the Alhambra, with its brilliant court, the Generalife; and poets, travellers, and men of science gathered at Granada, Cordoba, and at Isbilieh. Ab-Motacim, the poet king of Cordoba, planted the hills with almond trees, to give the effect of snow, which Romaiquia longed

for. He wrote his *Kasidas*, and filled the court-yard full of spices and sugar for his queen to trample on, when she saw the women of the brick-makers kneading the clay with naked feet, and found her riches but a burden to her. Averroes and Avicenna, the doctors of medicine and of law, laid down their foolish rules of practice and of conduct, and all went well. Medina-el-Azahra, now a pile of stones where shepherds sleep or make believe to watch their sheep, where once the Caliph entertained the ambassador from Constantinople, showing him the golden basin full of quicksilver, "like a great ocean," rose from the arid hills, and seemed eternal. Allah appeared to smile upon his people, and in proof of it let his star shine. Jehovah though was jealous. A jealous God, evolved by Jews and taken upon trust by Christians, could not endure the empire of Islam. Again town after town was conquered, Baeza, Loja, Antequera, Guadix and Velez-Malaga, even Alhama (Woe is me, Alhama), lastly Granada. Then came the kingdom of the Alpujarra, with the persecutions and the rebellions, Arabs and Christians fighting like wolves and torturing one another for the love of their respective Gods. Yet the star lingered on at Fuengirola, and whilst it still was seen hope was not lost. A century elapsed, and from Gibraltar—from the spot where first they landed—the last Moors embarked. In Spain, where once they ruled from Jaca to Tarifa, no Moor

was left. Perhaps about the mountain villages of Ronda a few remained, but christianized by force, the sword and faggot ever the best spurs to the true faith. But they were not the folk to think of stars or legends, so that no one (of the true faith) could say whether Sohail still lingered over Spain.

Trains, telegraphs, and phonographs, elections and debates in parliament, with clothes unsuited to the people they deform, give a false air of Europe to the land. The palm-trees, cactus, canes, and olives, the tapia walls, the women's walk and eyes, the horses' paces, and the fatalistic air which hangs on everything, give them the lie direct. The empire of the Arabs, though departed, yet retains its hold. The hands that built the mosque at Cordoba, the Giralda, the Alhambra, and almost every parish church in Southern Spain, from ruined aqueduct and mosque, sign to the Christian half derisively. So all the land from the gaunt northern mountains to the hot swamps along the Guad-el-Kebir (stretching from Seville to San Lucar) is part of Africa. The reasons are set forth lengthily by the ethnographers, economists, and the grave foolish rout of those who write for people who know nothing, of what they do not understand themselves.

But the star's lingering is the real cause, and whilst it lingers things can never really go on in Spain as they go on in England, where gloom obscures all stars. The Arabs, issuing from the desert like the khamsin, came, conquered, and

possessed, their star shone on them, and its rays sank deep into the land. Their empire waned, and they, retreating, disappeared into the sands from whence they sprang. Spain knows them not, but yet their influence remains. Only at Cadiz can the talisman be seen, shining low down on the horizon, and still waiting till the precession of the equinoxes takes it across the Straits. Let it recross, and shine upon the old wild life of the vast plains, upon the horsemen flying on the sands, whirling and circling like gulls, whilst the veiled women raise the joyous cry which pierces ears and soul; upon the solemn stately men who sit and look at nothing all a summer's day, and above all upon the waveless inland sea men call the Sahara.

There may it shine for ever on the life unchanged since the Moalakat, when first the rude astronomers observed the talisman and framed the legend on some starry night, all seated on the ground.

THE END

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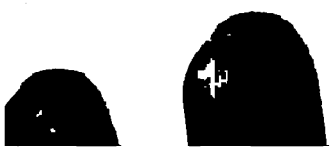

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